

# The Slavic Scene

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# The Slavic Scene

## Letter From the Chair

### Dear Friends,

As you may recall from the last issue of *The Slavic Scene*, we had an exceptionally stimulating fall semester 2013 ahead of us and the events exceeded our expectations! In September we held a symposium in honor of our former colleague, Professor Carl Proffer, who, together with his wife Ellendea, founded the highly influential publishing house *Ardis* here in Ann Arbor in 1971. Over the next two decades, the books *Ardis* published made their way back into the Soviet Union in a variety of unofficial ways, where they were treasured by an entire generation of the Russian intelligentsia. At the symposium, literary scholars and former editors and translators for *Ardis* reassessed the legacy that Carl Proffer left, on the occasion of what would have been his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. The proceedings of the symposium will be published this winter in the leading Russian literary journal, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* (*New Literary Observer*), with Olga Maiorova as guest editor.



On November 1 and 2, we celebrated the memory and the rich scholarly legacy of another amazing colleague who has left us, Professor Omry Ronen, by organizing and hosting, under the leadership of two of his former graduate students, Professor Karen Evan-Romaine (now chair of the Slavic Department at Wisconsin) and Professor Julie Hansen, (now a tenured professor at the University of Uppsala in Sweden), a symposium on the lasting impact of Omry Ronen's scholarly work. After a keynote address reviewing Professor Ronen's most significant books, given by Professor Barry Scherr of Dartmouth, eleven of his former graduate students, all of them now well established in their fields, gave papers in which they extended work that he had inspired. Karen and Julie are leading our initiative to have these essays published in a volume honoring Professor Ronen, and Professors Scherr, Michael Wachtel (Princeton) and myself are preparing for publication a volume of Professor Ronen's most important articles, with English translations of those articles which had heretofore been published only in Russian. The fourth volume in the series of Omry Ronen's essays entitled *Iz goroda Enn* (*From the City of Ann*) was also just published posthumously by *Zvezda's* publishing house in St. Petersburg.

Between these two symposia, in October, we hosted the visit of former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, who spoke to a large gathering about his hopes for Ukraine's entry into the European Union and the development of a more robust democracy in his country (as recent events have shown, neither goal will be accomplished without further vigorous efforts). The next day, Kateryna Yushchenko joined her husband on the podium to discuss the crucial work of the foundation she and her husband have established to aid in projects which address pressing social needs as well as initiatives in Ukrainian culture. All three events helped reinforce the courses that we teach, particularly a new course taught on the cultures of Ukraine and courses on Russian literature by Svitlana Rogovyk and Mikhail Krutikov. The Yushchenko visit inspired many to contribute very generously to the development of our program in Ukrainian language and culture, help which was greatly needed and much appreciated.

This winter semester, Professor Krzysztof Hoffman of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan has joined us as a Visiting Fulbright professor, teaching courses in 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish literature and in Polish cinema. Our faculty and students are very much enjoying our interactions with him and we look forward to learning more about his own scholarly work.

We are so grateful for your generosity over the past few years in helping us sustain a rich and vital program in Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian Studies. We wish you a happy and healthy year.



Herbert (Herb) Eagle [hjeagle@umich.edu](mailto:hjeagle@umich.edu)

# The Slavic Scene

## Highlights

### Advancing Omry Ronen's Legacy in Russian Literary Studies

By Julie Hansen

On November 1 & 2, 2013 a symposium in memory of Professor Omry Ronen was held by the University of Michigan Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Entitled "Advancing Omry Ronen's Legacy in Russian Literary Studies," it featured presentations by eleven of Professor Ronen's former students and dissertation advisees, several of whom had traveled from far and near to participate. The symposium was a special event in that it comprised a return to our alma mater, a reunion, an occasion for new acquaintances, and a forum for focused scholarly dialogue. Most of all, it was an opportunity to reflect upon the significance of Professor Ronen's legacy as a scholar and teacher.

The symposium opened with words of welcome from the department chair Herbert Eagle, followed by a keynote lecture on Professor Ronen's critical legacy by Barry Scherr (Dartmouth College). The impressive breadth and depth of Professor Ronen's contributions to Slavic literary studies were reflected not only in the keynote presentation, but also in the range of topics covered at the symposium, with panels devoted to poetics and prosody, Russian modernism, intertextuality, and contemporary literature. Papers were presented by Sara Feldman (University of Michigan), Karen Evans-Romaine (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Julie Hansen (Uppsala University), Olga Peters Hasty (Princeton University), Kelly E. Miller (UCLA), Nancy Pollak (Cornell University), Irena Ronen (Independent Scholar), Karen Rosenflanz (College of St. Scholastica), Timothy D. Sergay (University

of Albany-SUNY) and Michael Wachtel (Princeton University). They explored a number of theoretical and critical issues related to works by Anna Akhmatova, Boris Eikhenbaum, Olga Grushin, Osip Mandelstam, Vladimir Nabokov, Boris Pasternak, Yuri Tynianov, among others. Further topics included Hebrew and Yiddish translations of Puskhin's *Evgeny Onegin*, as well as parallels between Russian modernism and J. Michael Walker's recent literary map of Los Angeles. Common themes characteristic of Professor Ronen's scholarship ran throughout the papers, such as the ethics of literary criticism, the art of close reading, and the pleasure of scholarly detective work.

The symposium concluded with a dinner followed by personal reminiscences of Professor Ronen, including contributions sent by those unable to attend. He is remembered as a phenomenal scholar, an inspiring mentor, and a devoted and generous teacher.

Work is underway on publication of a collection of Professor Ronen's articles, and conference participants discussed plans for a collection of articles in his memory by his former students.



# The Slavic Scene

## Highlights

### A Visit from President & First Lady Yushchenko

In October 2013, the Slavic Department, along with the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies (WCED) and the Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia (WCEE), was fortunate to host former President Viktor Yushchenko and First Lady Kateryna Yushchenko of Ukraine. In anticipation of his visit, Anna Grzymala-Busse, director of the WCED, told *LSA Today*, "It will be fascinating to hear from one of the key participants of the Orange Revolution, what lessons he's drawn, what views he has on the Ukrainian developments after the Orange Revolution." President Yushchenko did not disappoint.

On Thursday, October 3, as part of the Weiser Center's fifth anniversary celebrations, President Yushchenko delivered an address in the Rackham Amphitheatre, "Shades of Orange: A Decade of Ukrainian Democracy" in reference to the Orange Revolution that took place in Ukraine after the presidential election in 2004. Mr. Yushchenko was elected President and served from 2005-2010.

President and Mrs. Yushchenko, together with members of the Ukrainian Students' Association, met in a more intimate format at the reception for the "Ukrainian Women's Handiwork" exhibit in Lane Hall, organized by the Ukrainian Women's League of Ann Arbor. On Friday, October 4 at the Clark Library, the Slavic Department hosted a seminar, "Ukrainian Society, Culture and Politics," where President and Mrs. Yushchenko spoke with Ukrainian students, faculty, and members of the community. Friday's discussion was moderated by Jessica Zychowicz, a PhD candidate in the Slavic Department.

President Yushchenko spoke at both events to full audiences about issues surrounding Ukrainian history, unity, and current politics. He voiced his vision for the future of Ukraine and the vote on a trade agreement with the European Union that was to take place in November. The discussion on Friday also turned toward initiatives in culture and education that are part of Mrs. Yushchenko's Ukraine 3000 International Charitable Fund.

"The Yushchenkos' visit was a rare opportunity for students to think about history as something that is very much alive and interwoven with human dialogue," said Zychowicz. "I was surprised by how down-to-earth former First Lady Yushchenko

is; after the talk, she took a few minutes out to ask me about our campus life, joking that she'd love to take a course. Given the current situation in Ukraine, it is humbling to know that our University is part of a broader effort to effect peaceful dialogue at a critical juncture of global concern."

Katerina Chekhovskiy, a current minor in Ukrainian Language, Literature and Culture, was also struck by the Yushchenkos' affability. "The President and First Lady were very easy to talk to, they were very humble and approachable... It was great to get a personal invitation from the First Lady to be an intern at their organization in the future," Chekhovskiy said. She was also able to talk with them several times, including asking a few questions during an open session following the Friday seminar. "It was such an honor addressing the President and First Lady of my homeland. I was ecstatic and so excited to be able to talk to them face-to-face... [I]t was so wonderful to have the opportunity to talk to them, talk about their efforts in Ukraine, and about my personal family history."

Svitlana Rogovyk, Lecturer and Language Coordinator for the Slavic Department, was instrumental in the two-year process of planning and coordinating the Yushchenkos' visit to Ann Arbor. "These events were wonderful in bringing visibility to the Ukrainian program at Michigan," she said. "We are looking forward to the possibility of future collaboration with Ukrainian non-profits and academic organizations in Kyiv and Lviv."

In addition to the possibility of direct collaboration, the Weiser Center will continue to generously offer their support as a result of the overwhelming interest in both these events and the Ukrainian program. The Kabcenell New Europe Grants – funding open to undergraduates studying over the summer in the "New Europe," including Ukraine – and the Ukrainian Research Grant – open to both graduate and undergraduate students for summer or semester-long projects in Ukraine – are new funding initiatives the Weiser Center is offering to current students.

"Together with the Weiser Center, we will be able to support our students as they take advantage of all these opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge of and experience in Ukraine," Rogovyk said.



# The Slavic Scene

## In The Classroom

### Beginning Russian Students Take Field Trip to Local Performance of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*

By Natasha McCauley

In late November, over thirty students in beginning and intermediate Russian and I went to see Anton Chekhov's famous play *Three Sisters*, put on by the University of Michigan's Department of Theater and Drama. The trip, which was funded by an Arts at Michigan grant, was a huge success.

Before watching the performance, students were given background information on Chekhov and the play, without which much of the performance easily could have been lost on an uninformed audience. In Russian 101, we discussed Chekhov's biography and read excerpts of the play in both Russian and English. Then, we viewed different performances of the same scenes, one in Russian and one in English, and compared not only the interpretations of the play, but also the effects the language has on the audience's understanding of the performance.

In addition, Professor Michael Makin, who is teaching a course on Chekhov in the Winter semester, gave a lecture on *Three Sisters* the day before the performance. In the lecture, Professor Makin discussed the cultural and historical background of the play, including its success at the Moscow Arts Theater with director Constantin Stanislavsky and method acting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Greetings from Prague!

Studying abroad during the football season at the University of Michigan may seem like a sacrifice for some undergrads, but for me a semester of rich cultural experiences and new friendships was worth the price. The Center for Global and Intercultural Studies (CGIS) on campus helped me through the visa process and on September 9<sup>th</sup> I found myself in Prague beginning orientation with over 80 students from across the US. With two classmates—soon to be friends—I signed a lease for an apartment in the heart of Prague, only a 7 minute walk from Wenceslas Square. The local program coordinators were amazingly helpful in facilitating our adjustment to the new environment, arranging a semester of "survival" Czech for beginners, and a third-year independent study course for me, in addition to meet ups with local students and a city tour showing us around the uniquely modern--but centuries old—city.

Living in the Czech Republic during the changing colors of fall and the following festive holiday season was like nothing

After the performance, several of the students and I discussed the performance over dinner. Overall, the students gave it rave reviews. We felt that the actors were extremely successful in portraying the subtleties of Chekhov's work, while keeping the play entertaining and funny to all audience members, even those who may have been unfamiliar with Chekhov. For many of my students, this was their first trip to the theater and they each expressed surprise at how funny the performance was. Not knowing what to expect, many said afterwards that they were scared of being bored for the entire three hours. Instead, they said, they were engaged and entertained every minute.



While the immediate goal of engaging undergraduate students was certainly met, we hope that this will create and encourage further interest in Russian language and culture, both in next semester's courses and in Russian events in the future.

By Rachel Reed

else I've experienced. The nearby forested mountain ranges, traditionally-decorated villages of Christmas markets, and the bustling city itself were breathtaking and many weekends were spent exploring the surrounding regions, or taking advantage of the wealth of cultural activities going on within the city. One thing I came to appreciate during my short stay there was the close relationship locals—even Prague urbanites—had with nature. Prague's sprawling Letná Park and Kampa Island, as well as Vítkov Hill, were the perfect places to spend study breaks or escape city life for an afternoon. One of my last nights in Prague was spent climbing to the top of Vítkov Hill to take in, one last time, the breathtaking view of the twinkling city lights below. (continued on page 9)



# The Slavic Scene

## Faculty Focus

### Meet Krzysztof Hoffmann, Visiting Fulbright Professor



When in summer 2013 I found out that I obtained a Fulbright lectureship, in other words that I was to spend the first several months of 2014 in Ann Arbor, I did not know too much about this city, to put it mildly. All my knowledge was limited to the fact that it was in Ann Arbor where the second poetry slam ever had taken place. Later I checked that it was in 1987, when I was 4. If someone outside of Europe heard about my hometown, Poznań, it is probably due to the fact that it was there that high-ranking Nazi officials were informed about the Holocaust. He or she might know that it was in 1943, the speaker was Himmler himself and this gloomy episode is depicted in e.g. Littell's *The Kindly Ones*.

At my home Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology) I defended my PhD thesis titled *Poetry as a language possible*

*of philosophy*. The title is a brief summary of my main research field. Among a few other things, I also published a book on one of my favorite contemporary Polish poets, Eugeniusz Tkacyszyn-Dycki. In the Slavic department I will teach two courses – 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish literature and Polish postwar cinema.

Thanks to the new wonderful friends I was corresponding with while preparing my courses now I know a bit more about Ann Arbor and U-M. I hope that after the winter term not only will my students be able to say that they know someone from Poznań, but also they will know a few things about Polish culture. If these things will turn out to be important ones, it will be the greatest reward.

### Rebellion: A Polish Tradition

By Piotr Westwalewicz

In the fall 2013 semester, I had the opportunity to teach a freshman writing seminar, Slavic 151. This was a new course designed primarily to help incoming freshmen assess and improve their writing skills. The thematic focus of the course was the history of rebellion in Polish culture.

The course proved to be a demanding but fun journey of discovery for both my students and for me. I had never taught a writing seminar before so the logistics of assigning, reading, reviewing, and grading a large number of essays was a small challenge and a “leap into the unknown”. The idea of the course’s thematic focus being of secondary importance was also a new concept for me. Finding the right balance between writing skills practice – and the investigation of the peculiar and sometimes puzzling history of Polish inclination to “swim against the current” – was a constant process of negotiation and adjustments.

In the end, several successes were recorded. The class roster remained the same through the add/

drop deadline in September, which meant all the students enjoyed it enough to stay. I began to relax a little then. I really started to breathe after the first two rounds of essays had been submitted and reviewed. The students clearly enjoyed the topic. More importantly, they were happy to engage in independent research and analysis. And, even more importantly, the vast majority of the students saw a marked improvement in their writing.

The support from Sweetland Writing Center was both instrumental and educational. I found the staff at SWC very helpful and more than willing to spend time suggesting practical solutions to class logistics (special thanks to Naomi Silver).

So the “journey” ended well. The main goals were accomplished. The students learned and improved (as did the instructor). I now look forward to teaching the seminar again.

# The Slavic Scene

## Graduate Student Focus

### Meet Our Newest Graduate Students

#### Bradley Goerne



After receiving his BA in Russian at the University of Chicago in 2010, Bradley Goerne completed an editorial internship at Yale University Press and then worked for an antiquarian bookseller. He later served in an administrative capacity at Dalkey Archive Press, a non-profit literary publisher that specializes in translations of foreign literature. Bradley's research interests focus primarily on comparative literary and aesthetic modernism in late imperial Austro-Hungary and its successor states. He intends to place national literary traditions in dialogue and investigate relations between the formation of public spheres and intellectual communities in central Europe and contemporaneous aesthetic developments. Related interests include the development of modern literary theory in central Europe and its subsequent spread to post-war France, the prevalence of geopolitical apathy in twentieth-century intellectual history (esp. phenomenology, psychoanalysis, structuralism), the formation of scholarly disciplines (esp. philology, history, art history) in the nineteenth century, and the Austro-Hungarian filmmaking diaspora's aesthetic-ethnographic critique of the American culture industry.

#### Joanna Mazurkiewicz



My name is Joanna Mazurkiewicz, but my friends call me Jana. Following Yiddish, Czech, English and German language courses throughout Europe, North America, and Israel, I decided to explore Yiddish theatre in my Master's thesis project. Above all, this project aimed to answer the question of whether or not it makes any sense to have an active Yiddish theatre today. A reworked version of this thesis, under the title 'Death or Resurrection? Contemporary Yiddish Theatre in Europe', is in the process of being published in Poland. After earning my Master's degree, I was fortunate to be able to utilize the Yiddish skills and knowledge obtained during my studies, language courses, theatre workshops, and internships in actual functioning institutions. My next academic goal is to conduct research on Yiddish literature, film and theatre in The United States, and to develop it into a Ph.D. thesis. My most enjoyable hobby is learning foreign languages and cultures via traveling and meeting new people. I am extremely excited to be a student again!

#### Haley Laurila



Haley first developed an interest in Russia after seeing a documentary about Siberia in high school. She then fell down the rabbit hole. Haley graduated with a B.A. in Russian Language and Culture and an M.A. in Film Studies from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia where her research focused on the influence of Shakespeare in Russian culture, urban space in literature and film, and memory in the post-Soviet era. After graduating with a M.A., Haley had no intention of pursuing further graduate study, but after spending a year away from academia, she realized how much she missed being surrounded by Russian literature and culture and decided to pursue a PhD. Currently, her research interests focus on the legacy of Soviet environmental catastrophes, in particular, Chernobyl and its nuclear legacy, post-Soviet abandoned and forgotten spaces, urban decay, and cultural memory.

Visit [www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/graduates/currentstudents](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/graduates/currentstudents) to learn more about our grad students.

# The Slavic Scene

## Staying Connected

### Kelly E. Miller (M.A. '96 - Ph.D. '02)

As a graduate student in the University of Michigan's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, I was trained by leading scholars to be a philologist, one who loves language and literature, and also to be a teacher, who cultivates that love of language and literature in others. I am continuing to do this important work, carrying on the legacy of my teachers, but I am doing so not as a professor in a Slavic Department, but as a librarian who actively teaches and writes. Thanks to a postdoctoral fellowship in academic libraries that I received in 2005 from the Council on Libraries and Information Resources (CLIR), I have spent the last eight years working in university research libraries, first at the University of Virginia Library and, since 2011, at the UCLA Library.

I am currently the Director of Teaching and Learning Services at the UCLA Library, where I am leading efforts to align library services, collections, and spaces in support of key priorities for undergraduate education. The hub for Teaching and Learning Services is located in UCLA's most historic, beautiful library building on campus, the Powell Library, built in 1929 and named after the librarian and writer, Lawrence Clark Powell. Powell once wrote that "[a library is] a magnet which draws the intellectually curious." I think this statement is more true than ever in the early 21<sup>st</sup>-century, when libraries are inhabiting both physical and virtual realms simultaneously, and we have vast library collections at our fingertips, no matter where we are in the world.

At UCLA's Library, we've just launched new "Inquiry Labs" (a.k.a. "InqLabs"), where students can consult with librarians and peers on strategies, tools, and resources for research and writing in the digital age. The goal of the InqLabs is not just to help students be more successful academically, but also to inspire their curiosity about the world and encourage their desire to tackle challenging, pressing questions that often reach across disciplines. InqLabs are also supporting faculty who are teaching

with library collections in experimental ways. I believe that libraries are rapidly becoming new laboratories for learning, especially in the humanities and social sciences, where faculty, students, librarians, and technologists can work together on projects that require many types of expertise.

One of the environments that nurtured my own growth as a student was the University of Michigan Library, where I browsed stacks in the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library and Fine Arts Library, met with librarians, and spent hours reading and working on seminar papers and, eventually, my dissertation. The U-M Library helped me prepare for conducting research at extraordinary libraries and archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krakow, and Prague. While a graduate student, I also spent a year working as a library employee in the Office of Exchanges and Gifts at the U-M Library. This work complemented the excellent experience I received as a Teaching Assistant in the Slavic Department, helping me prepare for multiple employment opportunities simultaneously.

Libraries continue to serve as potent symbols of human intellectual achievement and creativity. Today libraries are preserving and providing access to knowledge, while also enabling new ways to create and share that knowledge with broader communities. The massive migration of print and manuscript collections into online environments has only just begun; there is much collaborative work – and great opportunity – ahead for humanists working in higher education, whether as faculty members, librarians, instructional designers, educational technologists, or in other roles that require understanding of the research process and a passion for learning. I believe that the titles we hold within higher education are mattering less and less, while the work we do together to educate and inspire new generations is becoming more and more significant.

**Congratulations to Meghan Forbes  
& Paulina Duda on becoming  
PhD candidates in Fall 2013.**



## Aleksandar Bošković (Ph.D. '13)

As the new Lecturer in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, I had an exciting first semester teaching at Columbia University and living in New York City. My position includes teaching three levels of language as well as South Slavic literature and culture courses. So far, however, I have taught elementary and intermediate language courses, with seven and four students respectively, and supervised a direct reading course with a graduate student in Balkan History. Columbia is a vibrant and highly inspiring environment to work in and I'm lucky to have great students and colleagues.

I attended many interesting lectures, mini-conferences and workshops in different departments on campus and organized several events for the Njegoš Endowment for Serbian Language and Culture at the Harriman Institute. For example, this November I organized a screening of the documentary film "Second meeting," followed by a Q&A section with the director, Željko Mirković, and the in-class lecture on Miloš Crnjanski's novel *Migrations* by Prof. Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover (Monash University). In October, I delivered a lecture called "I Am Not Ashamed of My Communist Past: Dušan Makavejev's *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*," for which I was well-prepared thanks to my long-term experience as a GSI for Prof. Herbert Eagle's East and Central European Cinema course. Together with Meghan Forbes and Prof. Jindřich Toman, I participated in the successful panel on Czech avant-garde at the ASEES National Conference in Boston, where I delivered my paper "Avant-Garde Poetry's

### ("Greetings from Prague!" - continued from page 5)

But even as a modern capital city, metropolitan life in Prague struck me as relaxed and welcoming, especially when compared with its western counterparts. In the city center, one could find coworkers conversing over an afternoon espresso, friends swapping stories over a Pilsner at a local pub, or a family visiting the magical Christmas markets in Old Town Square.

Prague was a city that got under my skin, where I found myself adjusting to the pace and wondering why I hadn't always approached life this way. One common Czech proverb "Co je doma, to se počítá" or "it's what is at home that counts" is something that has always held true in my life—it's at home where

Glyphs: Typography, Photography, and Choreography in Nezval's and Teige's *Alphabet* (1926)." I am also excited about the opportunity to turn part of my dissertation chapter into the article "Агитационная фотопоема как рукотворный памятник" ("Propagandistic Photopoeem as a Handmade Monument"), which will be published in the Russian reconstruction of the unpublished 1924 book, Владимир Маяковский. Поема «Рабочим Курска, добывшим первую руду...» (СПб. : Издательство Европейского университета в Санкт-Петербурге, 2014) [Vladimir Mayakovsky. Poem "To the Workers of Kursk Who Extracted the First Ore...": A series of graphic photomontages by Yuri Rozhkov. Reconstruction of the unpublished 1924 book. Articles. Commentary / compiled by K. Matissen, edited by A. Rossomakhin. St. Petersburg: European University Press, 2014.].



I am truly thankful to everyone at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at University of Michigan who helped and supported my professional development. It is a pleasure to continue working with the wonderful individuals at this Department and I look forward to collaborative dialogues and projects in the years to come.

memories are made. But through my experience in Prague, I've realized that wherever friendships form, there too a "home" is built in the heart. Even as I return home to the US, I can't help but think of that small apartment, on the border of New Town and Vinohrady—where meals, laughs, and life were shared—as my home, in the city of a hundred spires.

Rachel Reed (lower left), spending time in Prague with friends.



# The Slavic Scene

## Community Focus

### 20th Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival

By Paulina Duda

Young people tend to be arrogant. Certainly, I am not an exception (although some may object to call me young). When I came to my first Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival meeting last year that kind of youthful hubris took over: the organising Festival committee consisted of people twice as old as I (my thought: do they know how to use social media effectively?). What's worse, all of them were scientists (do they know what art is? Do they know what terms such as "diagetic" or "jump-cut" mean?) and most of them were former Solidarity activists (do they know that we no longer fight with communism?).

Sure, they knew it all. They've been organising the Festival since 1993 doing just great without my "priceless" help. But that, however, didn't prevent the organizers from appreciating my readiness to help: checking tickets? Distributing flyers? Selling pastries? I was eager to do just anything. And I heard: "You will host our Festival". So I did – together with Wlodek Wielbut – and I continued this year, at the 20th Festival. But my involvement went far beyond hosting the event. I became the member of the film selection jury evaluating submitted films that

eventually competed for two prestigious awards: The Ewa Pieta Award for the best documentary or short (Slawomir Grunberg for his film *Castaways*) and The Andrzej Dolata Award for the best debut submitted (Adrian Prawica for *The Fourth Partition*). The highlight of the Festival, however, was the screening of *The Closed Circuit* directed by a world renowned director, Ryszard Bugajski. The film together with the Q&A session with the filmmaker and an actress Maria Mamona brought many people to the Michigan Theatre. After that, everybody was welcomed at the open reception at Amadeus Restaurant.



Paulina Duda, Ryszard Bugajski, and Maria Mamona

Certainly not everything went smoothly. It was impossible to avoid problems with timing, raising enough money to fit the budget or having enough volunteers to help with the event. But the key thing is to appreciate the efforts of people who organized the event, that after Chicago, is the oldest Polish film festival in the States. And that those people expect nothing in return.

### Stepping Out Into the Community to Write with Children

By Meghan Forbes

Hannah McMurray (German) and myself were 2013 recipients of an Arts of Citizenship grant, with which we brought our skills as teachers, researchers and editors (of the publication *harlequin creature*) into the community to conduct a series of creative writing workshops with children. In our workshop, called "Time Travel with Typewriters," we transport our students back in time 100 years (to the period around which our dissertations happen to take off) with the use of typewriters.

Putting words on the page by striking keys that smack spindly metal arms onto paper is clearly not a chore for our students -- it is novel and fun. At one workshop in November, we convened in the basement of the Downtown branch of the Ann Arbor District Library on a football Saturday. While the city outside the library was rumbling with the Michigan versus Nebraska game, inside could be

heard only the loud tapping of busy fingers on typewriter keys and the staccato of intermittent dings that come with the end of a line. At each workshop, there was the same level of noise and enthusiasm; there is no question that an old clanging metal machine with keys works wonders at getting kids to fill pages with inspired prose.

Our workshop will continue and expand to service the New York area, thanks to a recent successful community sourced fundraising campaign. We are indebted to the good folks at 826michigan for providing us with feedback on how to improve our workshop, and initiating an invitation to bring our workshop to 826NYC in May. It is also likely we will conduct a workshop at the Guggenheim, in collaboration with their upcoming exhibition on Italian Futurism.



# The Slavic Scene

## In Print

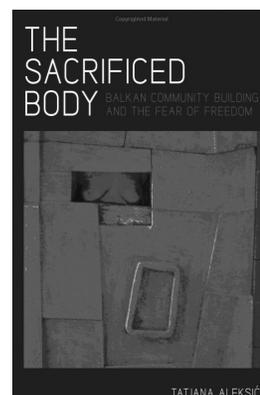
### Tatjana Aleksic - *The Sacrificed Body*

Living in one of the world's most volatile regions, the people of the Balkans have witnessed unrelenting political, economic, and social upheaval. In response, many have looked to building communities, both psychologically and materially, as a means of survival in the wake of crumbling governments and states. The foundational structures of these communities often center on the concept of individual sacrifice for the good of the whole. Many communities, however, are hijacked by restrictive ideologies, turning them into a model of intolerance and exclusion.

In *The Sacrificed Body*, Tatjana Aleksic examines the widespread use of the sacrificial metaphor in cultural texts and its importance to sustaining communal ideologies in the Balkan region. Aleksic further relates the theme to the sanctioning of ethnic cleansing, rape, and murder in the name of homogeneity and collective identity. Aleksic begins her study with the theme of the immurement of a live female body in the foundation of an important architectural structure, a trope she finds in texts from all over the Balkans. The male builders performing the sacrificial act have been called by a higher power who will ensure the durability of the structure and hence the patriarchal community as a whole.

In numerous examples ranging from literature to film and performance art, Aleksic views the theme of sacrifice and its relation to exclusion based on gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, or politics for the sake of community building. According to Aleksic, the sacrifice narrative becomes most prevalent during times of crisis brought on by wars, weak governments, foreign threats, or even globalizing tendencies. Because crisis justifies the very existence of restrictive communities, communalist ideology thrives on its perpetuation. They exist in a symbiotic relationship. Aleksic also acknowledges the emancipatory potential of a genuine community, after it has shaken off its ideological character.

Aleksic employs cultural theory, sociological analysis, and human rights studies to expose a historical narrative that is predominant regionally, if not globally. As she determines, in an era of both Western and non-Western neoliberalism, elitist hegemony will continue to both threaten and bolster communities along with their segregationist tactics.



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There is no question that these are challenging times for Slavic studies in the United States. Title VI cuts over the last few years have had a significant financial impact on the teaching of less commonly taught languages such as Czech, Ukrainian, Polish and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS). We are waiting to see the guidelines for the next Title VI grant competition (2014 – 2018) and the impact of congressional negotiations on federal funding available. At the same time, we are preparing for the very real possibility that funding will be greatly reduced or remain at currently reduced levels. In order to preserve the range of languages currently offered by the Department we are strategizing various plans for reducing costs while simultaneously reaching out to alternative funding sources.

Our primary goal over the next two years is to raise language endowments for Czech, Ukrainian and BCS.

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We sincerely thank the Ukrainian National Women's League of America, Chapter 50 for leading a generous gift campaign for our Ukrainian Studies Fund in October 2013, as well as their continued work on behalf of the fund.



Svitlana Rogovyk, Herb Eagle, and Oksana Posa