

The Slavic Scene

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

Letter From The Chair	2
In Memoriam of Benjamin Stolz	3
In the Classroom	4-5
Graduate Student Focus	6-7
Highlights	8-9
Staying Connected	10
In Print	11



Joseph Brodsky and Benjamin Stolz

The Slavic Scene

Letter From the Chair



Dear Friends

I am deeply saddened to tell you that this fall we lost another of our much loved departmental colleagues, Ben Stolz, who so ably served as our chair over a period of fifteen years. He taught in our department for thirty-seven years; many of us were his students and knew him personally. I had the good fortune to be his student in the late 1960s/early 1970s and his colleague over the past three decades. He was a marvelous teacher of Slavic linguistics—precise in his explanations, ready with illuminating examples, and always accessible, both in terms of the time he was willing to spend with students and his open-minded and friendly demeanor. Although I was a literature specialist, not a linguist, I took all of the Slavic linguistics courses that he offered, fascinated by the way he laid out for us, in a broad and precise way, the evolutionary stages and the phonological and morphological shifts in the development of the various languages from their Common Slavic origins. Besides his erudition and his pedagogical skill, he was a special person in the way that he cared about his students (and his fellow faculty members) as people.

In his time as chair (and I believe that he served in this capacity longer than anyone else in the department's history), he provided a steady hand, calm in the face of whatever problems arose, as well as a creative and entrepreneurial spirit that proved crucial in accomplishing big things. When our colleague Carl Proffer undertook his effort to rescue the young Joseph Brodsky from the persecution that faced him in the Soviet Union of the early 1970s, it was Ben who successfully, and in a very short time, secured resources in the College to make possible a position for the future Nobel prize-winner as a writer-in-residence and subsequently as a professor in our department (this wasn't as easy as it might sound today; although Brodsky's poetry was greatly admired by scholars of Russian literature in this country, he was at that time not so widely-known outside of Russian circles). A few years later Ben managed to bring to our department and the Linguistics Department the eminent scholar of Indo-European and Nostratic languages, our colleague Vitalij Shevoroshkin, and, roughly at the same time, he also brought to our growing community in the Modern Languages Building the brilliant young historian of Russia and the Caucasus, our esteemed colleague Ron Suny, as the Manoogian Professor of Armenian Studies. His impact on the university encompassed many cultures and disciplines.

Over his years at Michigan he helped to train several generations of future professors, many of whom are now teaching across this country. Perhaps Ben's unflappable, measured and under-stated style of problem-solving at the administrative level emboldened those of us who proved, in our own careers, willing to accept such responsibilities. In the last issue of Slavic Scene, I noted how many of our graduates had gone on to become chairs of Slavic and Russian departments at other colleges and universities, knowing that I was sure to have omitted some. One of those whom I inadvertently omitted was Bob Busch, who served as chair of the University of Alberta's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures during the 1970s and 1980s and went on to become the Associate Vice-President for Research there in the late 1980s and 1990s. Bob was a student during Ben Stolz's early years in the department and my classmate for a couple of those years; when I looked back at my list of departments with chairs who were Michigan alums, I noticed that all of those people were, almost certainly, former students of Ben Stolz.

We are carrying forward Ben's legacy of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary work in Slavic philology in our current graduate program, which now has students whose research concerns not only Russian literature and culture, but also Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, and, particularly, the diverse and interrelated Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian culture that flourished in the former Yugoslavia (and is still very much in evidence today). The Yugoslavia whose language(s) and verbal art Ben Stolz so loved and studied remains a significant part of our departmental life.

You can read more about the accomplishments and recent endeavors of our faculty, graduate students and alumni in the pages ahead.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year,


Herbert (Herb) Eagle hjeagle@umich.edu

The Slavic Scene

In Memoriam

Farewell to Our Dear Friend and Former Leader, Benjamin Stolz

By Herb Eagle

Professor Benjamin Stolz, who led our Department so brilliantly over a fifteen-year period, from 1972 to 1987, passed away on September 29. Most of his adult life was deeply intertwined with our department's; its continued prominence during the 1970s and 1980s was in no small measure a result of his wisdom and skill. He was a dear personal friend to many of our senior faculty, to the preceding generation of faculty, and to a very large number of graduate students. We will miss him.



Professor Benjamin Stolz

Ben first became interested in Russian as an undergraduate at Michigan in the early 1950s and he went on to become a graduate student in Slavic Linguistics at Harvard, receiving his Ph.D. in 1965. These were the years of the Cold War and Ben took leave of his studies for three years to serve his country as a naval intelligence officer, on shipboard in the Mediterranean and in Turkey. During the years of his service, he had the opportunity to study Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian at the outstanding Army Language School in Monterey, California. The language became the major focus of his research in the subsequent decades. He went on to do ground-breaking work on the formation of the Serbo-Croatian literary language, on issues related to language standardization, and on South Slavic oral folklore (particularly, the epic). His translation and critical edition of the sixteenth-century Konstantin Mihailovic Turkish Chronicle was one of the many highly-acclaimed publications he produced as author, translator or editor.

Ben Stolz was appointed Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures in 1964 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1969 and to Professor in 1973. He retired and became Professor Emeritus in May 2001. In all, he taught in our department for over thirty-seven years. At a time when all graduate students in Slavic were required to have a firm grounding in linguistics, he was the mainstay of the department's offerings in that area, teaching Introduction to Slavic Linguistics, Comparative Slavic Linguistics, Old Church Slavic, and the Structure of Russian. He also taught courses on South Slavic Folklore and, on occasion, on Yugoslav literature and Serbo-Croatian language. As a teacher he was much admired for the exceptional clarity of his explanations (even of very difficult concepts and structures) and the very personable way that he related to his students, undergraduate as well as graduate.

As chair of the department his accomplishments were many, and they were critical to our future and to our scholarly and teaching profile. One of his first major accomplishments was securing the funding from the College of LSA to bring the great Russian poet and future Nobel Laureate for Literature, Joseph Brodsky, to our campus, where he taught as a writer-in-residence and later as a professor, over a period of nearly a decade. The exceptional scholars whom he hired over the fifteen year period he was chair included Vitaly Shevoroshkin, Bogdana Carpenter, Omry Ronen, Jindrich Toman, and Michael Makin. The fact that all of them still remain at work on our Slavic corridor, continuing their research and teaching either as regular faculty members or as emeriti professors, is testimony to the loyalty Ben inspired in us. In addition, Ben was instrumental in advancing Armenian Studies at the University, working tirelessly to raise funds for endowed professorial chairs in Armenian history and literature and luring to Michigan from Oberlin College the brilliant and prolific historian, Ron Suny, as the Alex Manoogian Professor of Armenian History. Ron has continued to play a key role here and internationally as a teacher and scholar of Armenian, Russian and Soviet history and politics. Ben also was an important fundraiser and planner for the Institute for the Humanities at Michigan.

Certainly most important, Ben cared deeply about his colleagues and his students, not only in terms of their academic success, but also with regard to the quality of their lives in Ann Arbor. There were many times when he took actions that manifestly affected the lives and well-being of others, both students and faculty. In recognition of the special concern he had for graduate students, the Department has established the Benjamin Stolz Graduate Student Aid Fund, which will help our graduate students with

continued on page 9

The Slavic Scene

In the Classroom

First Year Seminars

"I enjoyed the fact that grades and tests were not the driving force to learn. The atmosphere was much more relaxed and thus learning was done purely for the learning and because the topics were interesting."

First Year Seminar (FYS) courses introduce freshman to tenured faculty in an intimate and supportive classroom experience. These courses are limited to 18 or 20 students and meet LSA's First Year Writing Requirement (FYWR) or Humanities (HU) requirement. According to the LSA Bulletin, they provide an in-depth look at specific areas of expertise, fire the imagination, and shine a light on the possibilities for scholarship.

The Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures is offering three FYS this fall. They are being taught by Professors Krutikov, Paloff, and Ronen. "Yiddish Love Stories" taught by Professor Krutikov, introduces students to stories, concepts, and literary devices of various authors. A film component is included, using both classic films and newer Hollywood productions, allowing the class to compare and contrast between the different mediums. He also encourages the students to view the text as fiction and analyze the various rhetorical devices in detail.

Professor Paloff's course "DUI (Discourse under the Influence): An Introduction to Narratology" examines especially striking instances of narrative manipulation within novels, poems, and essays. His class looks at how the author manipulates the reader

to see the world through the eyes of an intoxicated speaker. Class discussions consider how writers use intoxication to heighten the comedy of basically tragic stories while also commenting on national habits, social and cultural shortcomings, and personal dreams. Professor Paloff's course includes readings from Russian, Polish, and Czech works.

The "Russian Rogue's Progress," taught by Professor Ronen, examines Russian picaresque humor, satire, fantasy, and science fiction in the 19th and 20th centuries surveyed against the background of world literature and folklore. Readings include Gogol's *Dead Souls*, Ehrenburg's *Julio Jurenitj*; A.N. Tolstoy's *Garin's Death Ray*; Il'f and Petrov's *Twelve Chairs*, Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Babel's *My First Fee*, and more.

Past First Year Seminar courses offered by the Slavic Department include "World Utopia and Dystopia in Fiction and Film," "Yugoslav/Post Yugoslav Short Fiction," "Prague: The Magic City," "Languages and Cultures of Eastern Europe," "Russian Culture and Politics: The Last 200 Years," "New York, Paris, St. Petersburg: The City in Literature" and "Russian Short Stories."

Read more about LSA FYS courses online at lsa.umich.edu/students/fysem

Professors Michail Krutikov, Benjamin Paloff, and Omry Ronen teaching their first year seminars



Our First Ukrainian Minor

By Kathryn Pytiak

Growing up, my experiences with Ukrainian language and culture in an educational setting often involved me begging my mother not to make me go to Ukrainian Saturday School, and subsequently crying the entire forty minute car ride there each Saturday. After four years of this Saturday morning routine, my mother finally relented, and I became a “Ukie School” drop out at age seven. Imagine my mother’s surprise, then, fourteen years later when I essentially scolded her for not making me stick it out and when I admitted that I regret not pushing through and seeing it to the end.

My grandparents came to the U.S. from Ukraine during World War II, lived in a Ukrainian community surrounding a Ukrainian church, and both my parents married Ukrainians, making me 100% Ukrainian. Not surprisingly, my background permeated several areas of my life, including my Saturday mornings to my dismay as a young child. Despite the fact that Ukrainian was my first language, I lost the interest and ability to fluently speak and understand the language growing up. Though I took Spanish and Latin in high school and enjoyed these languages, I began to regret not being able to fully communicate with my grandparents or the rest of the Ukrainian community.

And then I came to the University of Michigan. Browsing the course guide, I stumbled upon the Ukrainian language courses and decided to enroll. I truly enjoyed the language and learning more about the culture and was even happier that I was once again beginning to be able to communicate with my grandparents. The following summer, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Lviv, Ukraine for six weeks. To say that I fell in love with the language, culture, and people is an understatement. I had a chance to experience my heritage first hand and to literally see where I come from, something I had taken for granted growing up.

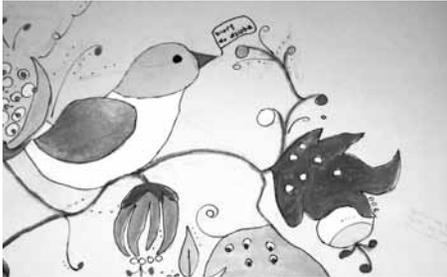
Upon my return to U-M that next fall, Svitlana Rogovyk told me that the department had just created the Minor in Ukrainian Studies program—the first in the country! Fresh off my experience from Ukraine, I was eager to learn even more and continue my education beyond language classes and jumped on the opportunity to pursue the minor. The more I learn about Ukrainian language and culture, I feel the more I learn about myself and my family—a process which all began with Ukrainian language courses, and continued further by the Minor in Ukrainian Studies program. I was honored to receive the Excellence in Ukrainian award last spring, and look forward to incorporating my Ukrainian background and education in my future career.



Kathryn Pytiak, our first Minor in Ukrainian studies, graduated in Spring 2010

The Slavic Scene

Graduate Student Focus



Jodi Greig

Having survived her first year of graduate school, Jodi decided to spend the summer solidifying her Polish language skills. She applied and received a summer FLAS for Polish language and ended up in her beloved, beautiful Kraków. She spent over two months enrolled in advanced courses at Prolog Szkoła Języków Obcych, where her Polish improved dramatically. Before and after starting her language program, she spent time collecting data for a project tentatively entitled, "Poetics of the Potty: Bathroom Graffiti in Kraków, Poland". She is now able to confidently assert her familiarity with almost every bar, café, and club in the city. A sample of her findings is shown on the left.



Sarah Sutter

Sarah Sutter, a second-year grad student, traveled to Krasnodar, Russia to conduct preliminary research on Kuban Cossack collective singing. Her research was funded by the CREES Research and Internship Fellowship, as well as through financial support from the Slavic Languages and Literatures Department. She worked with scholars from the Kuban State University and the Krasnodar State University of Culture and Art. A large part of her trip involved traveling to surrounding villages (*stanitsy*): she made recordings of ensembles, interviewed performers, and even did a little singing herself! One particularly exciting part of her trip was the Festival of Slavic Culture that she attended in Slavyansk-na-Kubani. Sarah is shown here (furthest right) taking notes at a rehearsal of a folk ensemble in the village of Chelbasskaya.



Marin Turk

With generous support from the Zvi Y. Gitelman Fellowship and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Marin spent over two months this summer in Moscow. She took an intensive Russian language course with a private tutor at Moscow State University. The course was part of a program offered by the School of Russian and Asian Studies. When she was not delirious from toxic peat bog smoke and the worst heat wave in recorded Russian history, she spent time with her host family. This was an invaluable linguistic and cultural experience. Marin and her host, a sociology professor and former Soviet dissident, spent long hours discussing Russian/Soviet history and culture. Often university students would come over and join the conversation. The intellectual stimulation more than made up for the lack of air-conditioning.

More Graduate Student News

This past July and August, **Yana Arnold** taught Russian 346, *Russian Literature from Romanticism to Realism* (Short Masterpieces of the Long Nineteenth-Century). She chose the readings and taught the course independently, with mentoring by Olga Maiorova.

On December 7, Yana will give a Brown Bag lecture

titled "The Shakespearean Circle: Lawyers, Literary Criticism, and Professional Self-Fashioning in Late Imperial Russia" at the Institute for the Humanities.

This talk is based on a chapter from her dissertation. She will also present this chapter at the Russian/Soviet History Workshop organized by the U-M Department of History on November 9, 2010.

Intellectual curiosity and spirit of collaboration are the two things that, in my view, define the atmosphere of graduate studies in our Department today. The creative, energetic, and highly determined cohort of our current graduate students bring fresh air into the Program. They research a wide array of interdisciplinary topics, and the diversity of their voices and perspectives makes our work intellectually exciting and refreshing. As the Slavic field increasingly shifts towards more inclusive cultural studies, the structure of our Program continues to develop as well. We welcome our students' interdisciplinary interests and encourage them to take advantage of what a major research university can offer: to study the theoretical frameworks of anthropology, history, linguistics, comparative literature and incorporate relevant methodologies into their projects.

– Olga Maiorova, Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor

Meet Our Newest Graduate Students

Meghan has spent much time since 2005 living in Prague, and is very much in love with Czech art, literature, and culture. She is particularly interested in 20th century Czech “epistolary fiction” and travel writing. The era in which her research interests primarily reside is the interwar period -- a time in which the dialogue between artists, writers, and theorists in Prague with those

in Germany, France, and Russia was notably dynamic. Meghan writes a lot of letters in her own right, as well as short fiction. She has a BA in Art History (with minors in Creative Writing and Studio Art) from New York University, and an MA in Czech Literature from Columbia. She hopes to fuse these two interests in art and literature in her dissertation work.

Meghan Forbes



Jamie Parsons graduated with a B.A. from the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, having studied psychology, church history and the history of modern institutions, and both Russian and American literature. Her research interests are diverse, but she is particularly

interested in women’s writings and experience in 20th and 21st century Russia, nationalism, and mythological and archetypal expressions of the unconscious in literature. In her free time, she pursues meditation and yoga, and rides buses around America.

Jamie Parsons



Jessica Zychowicz is researching contemporary Ukrainian women writers and their posturing as political activists. She is mainly focused on ways in which the Orange Revolution has influenced Polish-Ukrainian cultural exchanges and how the new Ukrainian ‘literary renaissance’ complements similar movements in Polish poetry and prose of the 1980s and 90s. Jessica was also

recently invited by the U.S. Department of State to travel to Prague in November with 50 other graduate students from select American universities to meet with 200 students and activists from across the Baltic states in a week-long conference on transatlantic leadership designed to advance research projects of mutual interest.

Highlights

3rd International Conference on Polish Studies

The University of Michigan hosted the 3rd International Conference in Polish Studies, September 16-18, 2010. An array of panelists shared their insights and research with nearly 100 attendees, sparking vibrant and lively debate over the three day conference. Several Slavic Department faculty and graduate students were in attendance.

- Professor Benjamin Paloff chaired the panel “W Polsce, czyli wszęǳie.”
- Ewa Pasek chaired the “Performing Poland” panel
- Piotr Westwalewicz chaired a panel titled “The Youth”
- Third year graduate student Jessica Zychowicz presented “The Crone and the Border: New Feminisms in the Writing of Olga Tokarczuk and Oksana Zabuzhko”
- Second year graduate student Jodi Greig presented “Exposure and Consciousness: Gender in the Works of Natasza Goerke”

As a biannual event, it is expected that the Fourth International conference will be hosted by the University of Illinois-Chicago under the guidance of the Polish Studies Association (PSA).



Imperial Nation Conference—Coming May 2011

Imperial Nation: Tsarist Russia and the Peoples of Empire is the topic of an international collaborative conference hosted by the Slavic and History Departments at the University of Michigan. Four Professors—Olga Maiorova from Slavic, Valarie Kivelson, Douglas Northrop, and Ronald Grigor Suny from History—are organizing an intensive workshop that will provide a forum for scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss core issues of Russian national self-perception. The workshop will focus on empire-building as an overarching framework for Russian national discourses, as well as on the experiences and changing understandings of the peoples of that empire.

Building on pre-circulated papers, the workshop

will examine various issues from interdisciplinary perspectives—history, literature, cultural studies, and anthropology—in order to promote an integral approach to the study of Russian and other nationalisms in the context of empire. At a time when the question of empire elicits debates in academia and beyond, this collaborative project seeks to explore it in historical depth, bringing together different analytical traditions and intellectual settings.

More than twenty scholars, including faculty members and graduate students at the University of Michigan, will deliver their papers at the workshop. More faculty and students are expected to participate in discussions and serve as moderators.

As additional conference information becomes available, it will be posted here:
www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic.

Benjamin Stolz *continued from page 3*

their study and research abroad. This is especially fitting because Ben relished the time that he spent living and doing research abroad, enjoying the cultures of many peoples, particularly those of Southeastern Europe. He would be pleased to know that most of our current graduate students studied and did research abroad this past summer, two of them in the former Yugoslavia. His memory will inspire our efforts to make such cross-cultural experiences possible for generations of students to come.

Professors John Mersereau, Joseph Brodsky, and Benjamin Stolz



Professor Jindrich Toman receives Humboldt Research Prize

Professor Jindrich Toman is one of the thirty-nine scholars worldwide receiving the 2010 Humboldt Research Prize (Humboldt-Forschungspreis). He will spend the 2010/11 academic year at the University Regensburg (Germany), pursuing his research on nineteenth-century Czech-Jewish culture as well as on projects relating to Czech Modernism. In doing so, he will expand upon his earlier work on Mácha, Havlíček, Kollár, Neruda and other nineteenth-century Czech authors, adding Czech and German-

language legends, ghetto stories, journalism, pulp literature, and other understudied sources. The main result of his stay in Regensburg will be a monograph tracing the impact of modernization and nationalism on Bohemia's Czech and Jewish cultures as reflected in works of literature. The University of Regensburg's "Bohemicum," an institute dedicated to Czech studies, will provide a most stimulating environment.



Manuscript Workshop—*Verbal Skepticism in Russian Poetry: from Romantics to Mandelstam, Brodsky, and Kibirov*

On October 8th, Assistant Professor Sofya Khagi presented her manuscript "Verbal Skepticism in Russian Poetry: from Romantics to Mandelstam, Brodsky, and Kibirov." The manuscript investigates the articulation of verbal skepticism (the notion that language is unable to furnish a full expression of human and the world) in Russian poetry, and argues that it informs the work of many of the greatest poets in the Russian poetic tradition. For some considerable time now the idealization of logos has been entrenched in critical and secular consciousness as a master narrative of Russian culture. It is this time-honored approach that

"Verbal Skepticism in Russian Poetry" seeks to put in perspective by charting the opposite tradition—the one that distrusts language and verbal art. The study traces the development of the topos from the age of Romanticism to contemporary poetic culture, and demonstrates that the continuity of antiverbal philosophical preoccupation is conspicuous. Essential facets of the antiverbal paradigm introduced during the Romantic period continue to haunt twentieth-century poetry. Moreover, Russian antiverbal lyrics address larger philosophical issues in astute and unorthodox ways, making a powerful contribution to the problematics of verbal skepticism.

The Slavic Scene

Staying Connected

Stephen Biegun, A.B. Russian, 1986

Growing up during the Cold War, Steve Biegun was raised with a mix of fascination and trepidation regarding the Soviet Union. During high school, his freshman World History teacher provided the impetus for his pursuit of Russian language and culture by writing “Czar” on the blackboard in Cyrillic and explaining the word’s origin to the class. Seeing the exotic and foreign alphabet prompted Steve to learn more about Russian language. Steve taught himself the Cyrillic alphabet and a few years later, chose to major in Russian at the University of Michigan.

Steve’s first class at U-M was Russian 101 with Professor Herb Eagle. He recalls how the class had a close, family-like atmosphere, the students were serious and committed, and the professor was accessible, passionate, and attentive. He also recalls Professor Makin’s classes—full of vitality, tough but fair—requiring students to do their very best work.

Knowing that he wanted to work in government, Steve moved to Washington D.C. after graduation. There he interviewed and waited for completion of his security clearance. During that time, he took an internship on Capitol Hill with the House Foreign Affairs Committee. This turned into a job with the House of Representatives. Steve loved being on Capitol Hill where he was exposed to various issues

and the debate surrounding them. The Berlin Wall fell a couple years later and in 1990 the Soviet Union collapsed. This resulted in an uncharted course for foreign policy; a complete change of geopolitical status. Steve built his career on these tremendous changes. He states that it was wonderful timing for growth in his career, “Russian language has always been a tremendous compliment to [my] positions.” He continues to believe that having Russian language skills are a distinguishing feature and provide advantages to any job applicant.

Today, as Corporate Officer and Vice President of International Governmental Affairs at Ford Motor Company, Steve is involved with policy and think tanks that are attentive to Russia. He travels regularly between Michigan, Washington, D.C., St. Petersburg and Moscow. Having spent the first twenty years of his career involved with Russian policy and the last five with Ford Motor Company, he is optimistic that Russia will evolve to a democratic society, even with the challenges that the country faces. “Today, for a student of Russian language, the breadth of opportunities is exciting. Some possible career paths include entertainment, law, non-government organizations, and numerous global and U.S. business opportunities. Russian language is a skill—a talent—that will single out a student.”



Stephen Biegun (A.B. 1986)
Corporate Officer and Vice
President of International
Governmental Affairs, Ford
Motor Company

Stephen E. Biegun received his A.B. in Russian in 1986. He began working at Ford Motor Company in 2004. Prior to joining Ford he has been involved in various advising capacities to the White House and Congress. He also participates on several boards and councils. Following is a brief overview:

- National Security Advisor to then senate majority leader, Senator Bill Frist
- Executive Secretary of the National Security Council
 - Senior staff member to the national security advisor Condoleezza Rice
 - Chief operating officer for the National Security Council
- Chief of Staff of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations from 1999–2000
- U.S. Senate Committee’s senior professional staff member for European affairs from 1994–98
- Resident Director in the Russian Federation for the International Republican Institute
- Staff member of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs from 1986–92
- Member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Aspen Strategy Group. Board member of the Bureau of Asian Research, the Moscow School of Political Studies, the U.S.-Russian Business Council, the U.S. Russia Investment Fund, and the U.S. Russia Foundation for Economic Development and the Rule of Law

The Slavic Scene

In Print



Omry Ronen's, *Love of Strangers*

Omry Ronen's newest book *Chuzheliubie* [*Love of Strangers*], a collection of eighteen essays that appeared in his personal column of the St. Petersburg literary journal *Zvezda* between March 2007 and January 2010, is now available from the Russian publisher, *Zvezda*. This is Professor Ronen's third book in the series of literary, historical, and biographical essays *Iz goroda Ènn* [*From the city of Ann*].

Professor Ronen traveled to St. Petersburg for the presentation of *Chuzheliubie* at the Anna Akhmatova Museum in the Fountain House. He also presented a paper at the international conference on intellectual framework of modern mysticism.

Poetry Payoff from Paloff, *The Politics* to arrive in January

Carnegie Mellon University Press releases your first collection of poems, *The Politics*, this January. Is this what you've been doing in your office all day?

No, not this. I started writing this book in early 2005 and finished it just before moving to Ann Arbor in 2007. In a certain respect, it is a conceptual counterweight to the problems I was addressing in my doctoral dissertation, which I was writing during the same period.

Are your poems then in tension with your scholarly work? How do you separate the two?

Many years ago I put the same question to Anne Carson, until recently our colleague in Comparative Literature, and I still remember her answer: "I don't." This infuriated me at the time; I was only just beginning to navigate these endeavors, and I wanted some solid advice about how to go about it. But she was right. Everything you do comes out of the same person, no matter how much the formal differences between poems and scholarship may make it seem otherwise. One

might say that they represent different disciplinary methods, different modes of inquiry. But the questions that interest me in one are the questions that interest me in the other.

Does the work you've been doing at U-M make its way into your newer poems?

Absolutely. Since coming to Michigan, I've been working on a book of poems that is, like *The Politics*, a counterweight—perhaps "complement" would be more accurate—to my academic research, which is largely concerned with the representation of freedom in literature. I think that my newer poems reflect that, though in ways that don't repeat what I am able to do in the scholarship.

So when's that book coming out?

First things first.



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Supporting
Slavic Studies

We ask you to consider supporting the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures gift funds. Your gifts will ensure:

- Scholarships in support of undergraduate study abroad and internship opportunities.
- Increased support for the Department's research and fellowship programs, which support graduate student and faculty projects.
- Enhancements to the teaching and learning of less commonly taught languages such as Czech, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Polish and Ukrainian.

Please consider giving generously to our effort to build the Department's future financial security. A gift of \$10,000 or more would create an endowment in your name for a purpose which will ensure the future of the Department and aligns with your interest in Slavic studies. In these tight budgetary times your support is all the more critical. Please contact Sheri Sytsema-Geiger to make your contribution: [syitsema@umich.edu](mailto:sytsema@umich.edu) or by telephone (734) 764-3227.

www.giving.umich.edu



Street Graffiti art, Putin's gas, and Duchamp signature (Belgrade, Serbia, 2010)

Polish Film Festival [coming soon]
www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival