

**FOURTEENTH ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE
ON SLAVIC AND EAST/CENTRAL EUROPEAN
STUDIES**

2013 UCLA

Valeria Betin

betinv@uci.edu

Major: European Studies. Minors: French; Russian Studies, UCI

“Suprematism and Constructivism, Deciphering Between the Two”

During the early 1900s, Russian culture was adapting to new changes that resulted from the outbreak of the Russian Revolution as well as the effects of WWI. Around the same time, a modern art movement known as the Russian Avant-Garde was formed. This period incorporates a series of different art movements, two of which – Suprematism and Constructivism – were initiated through the evolution of Neo-primitivism, Rayonism, and Cubo-Futurism. The artistic mindset of these movements led to the development of Suprematism, which based itself on the supremacy of the pure and the imaginative, and eventually Constructivism, which had a different goal that encompassed the consolidation of art and industry. While both Suprematism and Constructivism developed under the umbrella of the Russian Avant-Garde, the former is an artistic movement that encourages an imaginative form expression that opposes materialism while the latter is an artistic philosophy that encompasses the idea that art is a practice for a greater social purpose. Thus, it appears that Constructivism maintains a philosophy in which the proletariat is the center of everything while Suprematism holds that the artist is a creator and depicter of reality. It is important to note that the proletariat ideology, concepts of standardization, and functionality of Constructivism paved a way toward the concept of Socialist Realism. An ideology that developed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and became a regulation of art, literature, and consequently the only accepted form of artistic production in the Soviet Union.

Yelena Muratova

ymuratova@gmail.com

Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“Beethoven the Soviet Revolutionary”

For more than a century-and-a-half, the character, Ludwig van Beethoven, has been inextricably associated with revolution. Nowhere has this connection been made as salient as in the early Soviet Union, where the composer's image was sculpted into that of 'Beethoven the Revolutionary.' As exemplified by the musical celebrations of 1927 (the centennial of Beethoven's death and the ten-year anniversary of the October Revolution) this Beethoven was raised to heights of insurmountable heroism and used in an attempt to create a musical cultural revolution that would obliterate the 'dangerous' modern music trends of the time. This Beethoven's revolution: a complete destruction of the old and birth of a new dimension is, however, an over-simplification of the entire body of his work. The Soviet glorification of Ludwig van Beethoven as the musical apotheosis of revolution instead shows us the inherent limitations of such a view on his work. By approaching his compositions from a different direction, with a focus on cyclical evolution, one can draw a parallel between the flaws in the Soviet portrayal of Beethoven's work and the failures of their musical revolution at large.

Hannah Strassburger

H.strassburger123@gmail.com

Major: European Studies, UCLA

“Art as a Mirror in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union”

The paper compares Nazi Germany's critique of degenerate art with the Soviet Union's critique of formalism, examining not only the parallels between both regimes' resistance to modern art but also comparing the stylistic resolutions both used in official state art. By looking specifically at official state art depicting peasantry, a genre culturally significant for both Germany and Russia, one begins to see how the mechanisms of power used art to try and influence public opinion and propagate their political structure. The result was kitsch, what Igor Golomstock describes in his book *Totalitarian Art* as the “totalitarian aesthetic.” This aesthetic betrays the inner likeness of both these totalitarian regimes, despite their supposed ideological opposition to one another. Are these paintings art? Do they deserve our attention and space in today's cultural landscape? What do these works say about art as a political tool that can shape the world around it? Are they a reflection of society? Why was modern art so threatening to both regimes? Was there an alternative artistic route? Is all political art necessarily kitsch?

Daniela Bradvica

dbradvica@ucla.edu

Majors: Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics; Central and Eastern European Languages and Cultures, UCLA

“The Genetic Effects of Isolation on the Populations of Croatia's Dalmatian Islands”

Since the islands off of Croatia's Dalmatian coast were first inhabited, their populations have been geographically isolated. One effect of isolation that will be examined is the genetic effect of isolation. Genetic drift and the founder effect have caused a decrease in genetic diversity on

the islands. On the islands, there has been an increase in number of individuals who are carriers of a gene coding for a particular genetic disease (carriers). Geographic isolation has led to fewer options in mate selection, which leads to the practice of consanguinity, or mating with someone who is a first or second cousin. Because two people are related, there is an increased likelihood that they will be carriers of the same genetic diseases because they will have inherited the genes for these genetic diseases from their common ancestor. When related individuals who are both carriers of the same genetic disease bear children, their offspring will have one of three following characteristics. Their offspring will either be healthy non-carriers, healthy carriers, or afflicted with the genetic disease. Through this pattern of inheritance, genetic diseases have become prevalent on islands mainly in cases where there has been ancestral inbreeding. On all the islands, consanguinity has been proven to increase the risk of heart disease, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, schizophrenia, and Alzheimer's disease. Specific genetic diseases have become especially prevalent on specific islands. Examples that will be discussed are Mal de Meleda on Mljet, hereditary dwarfism on Krk, learning disabilities on Susak, and ovarian cancer on Lastovo.

Kirsten Howe

khowe@brynmawr.edu

Major: Russian Studies, Bryn Mawr College

“Between Stalin and Lysenko: The Legacy of Ideologically Correct Science in the USSR”

This paper examines the relationship between the communist system and the scientific community in the Soviet Union. Both a danger and a necessity to a developing communist nation, Science always held a precarious role in this society, where the Party wholly controlled the research agenda. The Communist Party promoted scientific development in order to industrialize, militarize, and solve the societal issues that confronted them, such as widespread famine and public health problems. Communist Doctrine also relied on science to legitimize its claim to truth; scientists were responsible for finding proof that dialectical materialism, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, was the natural order. Focusing specifically on the field of Biology, this paper investigates the rise of the peasant agronomist Trofim Lysenko and his influence on the scientific community through his genetics research in the USSR. Drawing conclusions on this unique, turbulent relationship, this paper analyzes the dismantling of Stalinism and the changing power dynamics in the Science world that ensued during the 1950's and 60's. Overall it examines how the Soviet Union, while trying to secure the foundations for its ideology, unintentionally created a system that supported farfetched and outlandish interpretations of science, leading to the discrediting of the official communist doctrine of the Union and eventual downfall of Soviet control in the scientific community.

Isabelle Darby

isabelleldarby@gmail.com

Major: Russian Language & Civilization. Certificate: Business, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“The Art of Cabbage: Russian Traditional Cooking, Fermentation, and Healing Practices Through the Lens of Modern Nutritional Science Dietetics”

In this paper I will explore traditional Russian cooking practices, specifically linking the history of fermentation of various foods to the modern concept of how these foods contribute to a healthy lifestyle. I will research methods of fermentation and how they are used to prepare traditional food and drink, looking specifically at kvashenaya kapusta (fermented cabbage) as a prime example. I will delve into both the gastronomical history and science behind this dish as a long-standing fixture of Russian cuisine. I will read Russian cookbooks and work with researcher Olga Trubetskoy (with whom I am doing an independent study through the Flagship Program on Nutritional Science in Russian) to better understand the biology and biochemistry of food as a potential source of healing. Fermentation refers to the conversion of sugar to acids, gases, and/or alcohol using yeast or bacteria. Fermentation is employed in preservation to create lactic acid in sour foods. Pickling has long been a cooking method preferred by Russians as a simple way of preserving vegetables and providing sustenance to survive harsh winters. This historic application of fermentation was to primarily preserve vitamins and nutrients. Modern Nutritional Science shows that the key virtue of fermentation is that it adds probiotics (active cultures of bacteria beneficial for human health) as well as the products of their metabolism to food and drink. Russians have enjoyed fermented products such as kefir, pickled cabbage, medovukha and kvas for centuries. Pickled cabbage is not romantic or fashionable and doesn't lend itself to marketing in the United States but still holds a prominent place on Russians' tables. In my paper I will take a closer look at the relationship Russians have to fermentation, and how this fits into the modern American understanding of “healthy eating.”

Maia G. Kustin
kustinm@gmail.com

Majors: Russian Studies; Psychology, UCLA

“Thinking Through Social Sciences’ in Analysis of Dostoevsky's System of Beliefs”

By definition, writers can write stories and scientists cannot. What separates writers from scientists is a principle of social construction as a foundation for reflection of reality. I, a Western-trained psychologist and bilingual and bicultural Russian, was troubled when I read the words of Theodor Shanin, rector of Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences: “Russian intelligentsia has thought through literature ... more than through the social sciences” (Shanin, 2005; in Magaril, 2009). Yet, we learned in school that Dostoevsky and Pushkin, authors of Russian literary classics, were writing in the style of fiction. Did someone say, “Russian social science researchers think through fiction?” The research of a social sciences investigator in Moscow indicates a point in this direction. With this thesis in mind, I read Dostoevsky's novel *Besy* in its original language to test a claim made by a researcher at Moscow State University:

“Dostoevsky is a true ideologist of universal superiority of the Russians.” The thesis finds support and prompts new discussion of Dostoevsky.

Ryan Wauson

ryanwauson@ucla.edu

Majors: Russian Studies; Economics, UCLA

“World War I and the Bolshevik Seizure of Power”

How the Bolsheviks were able to seize power during the October Revolution has long been a hotly debated question which I will attempt to answer by using a realist theoretical model to prove that the continuation of World War I after the February Revolution and the subsequent radicalization of the military and general populace were the most important reasons why Bolsheviks were able to shift the balance of power in their favor. The disorder and economic collapse caused by the war increased the unpopularity of the more moderate Provisional Government. As a result much of the public, especially the military, became radicalized to the point where mainstream socialist parties, such as the Mensheviks and SRs, lost much of their credibility and political power. This allowed the Bolsheviks to use their growing popularity and military strength to seize power in the October Revolution. Without their anti-war platform and the continuation of World War I, the Bolsheviks would have likely never been able to successfully achieve control.

Pola A. Lem

plem@haverford.edu

Major: Russian. Minor: Creative Writing, Haverford College

“Jewish Tongues in an Era of Silence: The Preservation and Suppression of Hebrew and Yiddish in the USSR”

As socialism evolved in the early 20th century, Jews, like other ethnic minorities, faced pressure to assimilate to Soviet society. This pressure extended beyond the censorship of Jewish history or religion; it bore substantial impact on the study of Jewish languages, Yiddish and Hebrew. While the use of these languages was never officially prohibited in the Soviet Constitution, it was nonetheless heavily suppressed. Inconsistent Soviet politics and open anti-Semitism severely inhibited their study. My paper examines obstacles in learning Jewish languages in the USSR, focusing on their survival after the fall of Stalin, during an "era of silence" of the 1960s.

Phillip Mikell

mikellphillip@ucla.edu

Major: History. Minor: Russian Studies, UCLA

“In Search of Comrade Rambo: Soviet Cinematic Portrayal of the American ‘Other’ during the 1980’s”

In the 1980s, when the political climate of the Cold War had cooled off considerably yet again, many Americans' perceptions of the Soviet "other" were shaped by simplistic cinematic depictions of their ideological foe. To the delight of Western moviegoers, larger-than-life Rambo characters battled Communism on the big screen -- securing unambiguous victories in theaters that seemed out-of-reach in actuality. Given the mutual distrust between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, it is surprising that the cinematic struggle for dominance was almost entirely one-sided. While much scholarship has been devoted to American Cold War cinematography, this study examines the most prominent Soviet films portraying the Western "other" in the 1980s. Rarely screened outside the Soviet Union until after its collapse, these films offer insight into a cinematic culture that -- counterintuitively -- was more interested in creating art than propaganda. The unique state-sponsored structure of the Soviet film industry and the advent of glasnost' provided a basis for filmmakers to produce polysemic, artistic films that lacked the sort of propagandistic elements that plagued the demand-driven American films of the period.

Izabella Ferayan

Izabella_F@yahoo.com

Major: Political Science, UCSB

“*Нехорошая Квартира*: A Personal, Literary and Public History”

Apartment building ten on Bolshaya Sadovaya Street in Moscow has come to represent Mikhail Bulgakov's legacy through being developed into a public museum. The characters from his novel, *The Master and Margarita* have come to life and audiences flock to Moscow to visit the Bulgakov Center and to watch the ghost of Berlioz roam Patriarch's Pond in theatrical excursions. The building itself housed revolutionaries, writers and artists, but Bulgakov can be attributed with bringing it notoriety. In 1921, the author moved into apartment 50 as part of the wave of citizens being placed into communal housing and faced the shifting traditions with anguish. His most famous characters developed based on his observations of his neighbors and his fears about the new regime. In *The Master and Margarita*, the devil takes residency in this apartment and it comes to encompass the struggle between good and evil. The setting is Soviet Moscow, where the devil and his companions roam freely causing havoc and the author subtly inserts his criticism of the new regime through his characters. Bulgakov feared the destruction of tradition and Russian history as the Soviet leaders often rewrote the past and attempted to censor the present. With the transformation of the modest apartment into a public place of literary pilgrimage, history in its rightful form has been protected and the phrase “manuscripts don't burn” has proven true.

Gladys Rivas

gladysrivas@ucla.edu

Majors: Comparative Literature; Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“The Inevitable Blur Between Author and Translator: Dostoevsky from Russian to English”

In any given language there are always words and phrases that cannot be given justice in another language. It becomes a task of selecting the words that appear as the “best” choices, but on whose authority is this decision made? When translating literature, this authority is given to an individual translator. After faded interest in the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a period of time, known as “The Russian Craze,” when it once again became popular to translate Russian literature into English. Among those being thrust onto an English reading public was Fyodor Dostoevsky. He began to gain respect for his merit as a writer, rather than simply for offering cultural insight into the lives of the Russian people. However, how much of his rise in popularity in English speaking countries can be attributed to his own merit and how much to the reputation of his translators? The popularity and respect for Dostoevsky’s work has seen its ups and down, but has, in general, withstood throughout time. What must be explored is the blur between Dostoevsky’s work in the original and Dostoevsky’s work in translation. A translator will always bring something of his or her own style to the work. However, is it simply the translator’s own personal style that accounts for the losses it suffers from the original or is it also the time period, considerations for the audience, publishing concerns, and the public’s already present regard for the author that must be taken into consideration?

Molly Murry

mollyjmurry@gmail.com

Major: Russian. Minor: Economics, Bryn Mawr College

“The Kyrgyz Republic: In Search of a Linguistic Identity”

This paper discusses Kyrgyzstan's efforts to preserve both cultural and linguistic facets of Kyrgyz society, which have been threatened in the wake of the young republic’s conflict-ridden development in second half of the 20th century. Analyses of educational testing records, population dynamics and linguistic developments show that Kyrgyz society has been heavily influenced by both Russian, as a means of social advancement, and Uzbek, as the mother language of around 800,000 citizens of the country. It is the legislative action taken in response to these influences that will affect the cultural and political landscapes of the Kyrgyz Republic in the coming years. At present the Kyrgyz government has taken steps to bolster the use of Russian and limit the use of Kyrgyz in government, education and business. Kyrgyz primarily continues to thrive as a cultural link to the nation’s ethnic history. In light of the domination of the Russian language in political and educational spheres and the prevalence of the Uzbek language in the southern regions of the republic, I will examine the geographic, socio-economic and cultural obstacles to linguistic unification. Though Kyrgyz social identity will inevitably remain subject to the changing opinions of its leadership and nationalist groups, I will further suggest ways in which the Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian languages could potentially co-exist in this post-Soviet country.

Jocelyn Arias Guevara

joss5@ucla.edu

Major: Russian Language and Literature, UCLA

“Language in Russian Science Fiction”

Science fiction in Russian literature uses language to identify a deeper purpose of the literature and serves to alienate the readers and create a new world from the one already known to readers through the use of neologisms. This paper explores how this is achieved through a careful balance of alien and familiar words to create a new world that is still familiar enough to be recognizable as a possible truth for the Russian people. In addition the influence of history, tradition, and politics is also explored as a factor that helped shape the lexicon employed by writers such as Tolstoy, Zamyatin, and the Strugatsky brothers. The vast body of Russian science fiction will be studied from “Dream of a Ridiculous Man” to “Roadside Picnic” in order to show how the language has evolved, and what this suggests about the texts. This paper also makes an effort to define neologisms as well as identify language usage that can be considered novel in light of past conventions. Additionally, the process of word formation is considered in order to further understand the creation of neologisms. This process is especially helpful to understand the purpose and role of neologisms within Russian science fiction. While often neologisms are seen as a method of alienation, in Russian science fiction the creation of new words refrains from creating a total separation from the readers and opts instead to maintain a level of familiarity by using neologisms created from morphemes in order to achieve the writer’s goal.

Miriam Goldman

goldman2@pdx.edu

Majors: Psychology; Russian Language and Literature, Portland State University

“The Impact of Oratorical Devices in Yuri Levitan’s Radio Address on June 22, 1941”

When a prepared speech is presented, the effect of timbre, pitch, intonation, rhythm, timing and other voice factors influence the listeners' interpretations of the speech. This paper examines these powerful oratorical devices used in Yuri Borisovich Levitan’s radio address of June 22, 1941. Levitan was the first to make the announcement to the Soviet nation of the Nazi invasion on USSR territory. He instilled nationalism, pride and evoked a sense of reassurance within the Soviet people and caused them to unite and fight against the fascists for the sovereignty of the Russian land and people by effective use of these oratorical devices. Differing connotations can be conveyed by the use of these oratorical devices. I hypothesized that native English speakers would recognize that the speech has immense importance and would detect cogent, persuasive, compelling, and moving words due to the variations of pitch, intonation, rhythm and timing. I will dissect this speech through an interdisciplinary approach, integrating the social scientific study of psychology, history, and prosody, a linguistic branch which explores the rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech.

Nela Perez

Majors: Psychology & Social Behavior; Applied Ecology. Minor: Women's Studies, UCI

“Russia’s Role in Furthering US Nonproliferation Policy under President Vladimir Putin’s Third Term”

Although no longer at the forefront of US foreign policy as in the days of the Cold War, Russia today under President Vladimir Putin’s third term has the potential to further the United States’ agenda in maintaining global security. One such area in which cooperation will benefit mutual interests is in the realm of nuclear nonproliferation, particularly with regards to Iran and North Korea. Despite this possibility, however, there continues to be a lingering distrust of foreign influence within the new Putin government, which threatens to stymie such collaborative efforts.

Michael Zhang

michaelzhang01@gmail.com

Majors: Statistics; Political Science. Minor: Russian, UCSB

“An Application of Automated Content Analysis in International Relations: Explaining Actor Behavior in the Russian-Georgian War”

There are conflicting theoretical models that exist to explain the behavior of Russia and Georgia during the Russian-Georgian War of 2008. Previous research contends that Russia either acted on the basis of pragmatic self-defense or on the basis of establishing a new ambitious sphere of influence in the post-Soviet era. For Georgia, experts argue that they either acted under a serious misperception of Russian resolve or they acted appropriately, exhausting all diplomatic channels before resorting to war. This study uses novel techniques from machine learning and data mining to categorize statements that leaders make on both the Russian and Georgian sides as being consistent with one of the explanatory models in order to quantitatively support a theoretical explanation for each actor’s behavior.

E. Nastacia Schmoll

nastacia@sbcglobal.net

Majors: English; Slavic Studies, UCSB

“Russia’s Gay ‘Propaganda’ Ban”

The proposed ban on homosexual “propaganda” in Russia this year has gained an increasing amount of attention from activists inside and outside of the country. Although homosexuality has been legal in Russia since 1993, had previously been legal between 1917 and 1930, and is legal in the Russian military (something the U.S. has only recently progressed on), there have been several attempts over the years to make homosexuality punishable by law. However, these attempts have been halted for political and economic reasons. In order to remain in the Council of Europe for instance, Russia had to continue the legality of homosexuality. At the same time it

has been suggested that political forces within Russia are a contributing factor to these anti-gay propositions. By passing such laws the Russian government can supposedly divert the country's attention away from other pressing issues to something the conservative majority can rally behind. When politics appear to be pulling the lawmakers in two separate directions it becomes the job of the people to push for the rights of the people. Part of the seriousness of this new law is that it takes away the voice of the people it directly concerns, or at least the legality of that voice. But whether it is by outright rejecting the law as arbitrary and unjust, or by working around the law, the voice of dissent is heard and felt. In a complicated situation like this, it will be that voice that makes the difference between censorship and repression and progress and equality.

Ruta Heinman

annaruta@yahoo.com

Majors: Economics/Mathematics; Slavic Languages and Literatures, UCSB

“Post Soviet Chocolate Factories: Is Privatization Really That Sweet?”

When the Soviet Union broke up, businesses were not completely torn down and rebuilt from the bottom up. Instead, they were slightly altered and adapted to the government's attempt at privatization. In order to avoid companies from falling into the hands of the mafia and pro-communists, the voucher system was implemented where every citizen got a share of a business. This plan was not successful, and many companies were back to the same managements as before. As candy is a product that most people consume, I focused on the privatization of confectionary factories in Belarus and Russia. Though Belarus' largest chocolate factory “Kommunarka” is an Open Joint Stock Company, President Lukashenko has placed the company on a Golden Share, preventing international investors from gaining access to it. Government influences can be easily seen in the product itself, where candy wrappers focus on nationalistic themes. In Russia, the three main confectionary factories are under the same ownership of “United Confectioners”, which is owned by an even larger holdings company named “Guta”. The CEO of this company has a colorful background and close ties to important people in the Russian government. These factors reflect how the management of “United Confectioners” operates. New chocolate factories have been established in Russia, and the presentation of their products might suggest fewer ties to the government. One company named “FinTur” uses unconventional names and Western ingredients to show their partnership with the US and Germany. Although post-Soviet businesses claim to be privatized, it is easily seen that the government has a foot (or more) in the door.

Lilit Arakelyan

larakelyan@ucla.edu

Major: English. Minor: Russian Literature, UCLA

“Perception and the Construction of Dichotomies in Chekhov's Short Stories”

Anton Chekhov's works continually address the theme of perception. In his short stories "Sleepy," "The Student," and "Lady with the Little Dog," Chekhov presents characters who are moved to sudden epiphanies guided along by their individual and, at times, fallible perceptions which change the course of their lives to varying degrees. In each story, Chekhov explores two ends of a spectrum which his characters grapple with and move across in order to find some solace amidst an individual crisis. In "Sleepy," the sleep-deprived Varka vacillates between the real world and the world of dreams, teetering on madness; in "The Student," Ivan's negative outlook which he assigns in part to nature's gloominess is transformed into a positive worldview that recognizes the wondrous beauty of the very nature he had condemned; in "Lady with the Little Dog," Gurov's feelings of love toward Anna prompt the establishment of a double life in which the public and private spheres he moves across allow for the means to continue his affair while simultaneously presenting the challenge of how they can successfully maneuver between these spheres and ultimately transcend their circumstance. The dichotomies Chekhov creates illustrate the fluidity of his characters' perceptions as their experiences and subsequent epiphanies lead them to traverse from one state of mind to another and, in the process, discover a way of wielding some semblance of control over their lives.

Rebekah Livermore
rlivermore@ucla.edu

Major: Russian Language and Literature. Minor: English, UCLA

“Burning with a Mad Flame”: The Use of Light in Vladimir Nabokov’s ‘The Return of Chorb’ in Mocking Richard Wagner’s *Parsifal*”

“The Return of Chorb” (“Возвращение Чорба”) is an early example of Nabokov’s work. In this short story, Nabokov mocks Richard Wagner’s opera *Parsifal* by creating strong contrasts between the two works. Wagner’s opera *Parsifal* is, though controversial, overall thought of as a religious and reverent opera. Nabokov’s story, on the other hand, attempts to satirize the very elements that compose *Parsifal*. One of the most crucial contrasts in the works is that between light and darkness. In both *Parsifal* itself and Nabokov’s story, *Parsifal* is associated with light. However, it is done so in reference to themes such as innocence, purity, and redemption. Nabokov contrasts his story with *Parsifal* through associating light with negative connotations, or employing darkness, whether physical or symbolic. He first juxtaposes the religious setting of *Parsifal* as well as the dignified setting of the opera house with a dark hotel where the main events in the story take place. He next contrasts what the characters who represent light in both works are compared to. Furthermore, he mocks the religious redemption achieved at the end of *Parsifal* by illustrating the short-lived resolution that is experienced by his own characters. Through his methodical mockery of Wagner’s work, “The Return of Chorb” functions as an important component of Nabokov’s earlier stories, and is a telling representation of some of his key artistic opinions as well.

Sho Tsubakiyama

shotsubakiyama33@gmail.com

Majors: Philosophy; Slavic Languages and Literatures, UCSB

“Witnesses to Martyrdom: Mishima, Eisenstein, and the Eroticized Body of St. Sebastian”

My research began with the discovery of a unique connection between the Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima and Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein. Though separated across cultural, artistic, and temporal boundaries, both artists share a near-obsessive interest in the Roman martyr and gay icon, St. Sebastian. In writing this paper, my initial objective was to discover how and why St. Sebastian appears with such frequency throughout Mishima and Eisenstein’s personal and artistic lives. However, besides analyzing the specific cases in which St. Sebastian and martyrdom play a role in the works of the two artists, attempting to answer this question has led me to explore this topic on a much wider scale. Therefore, my examination of Mishima and Eisenstein’s films and writings will draw upon concepts such as the Greek etymological root of martyrdom (*martus* meaning “witness”), the cultural associations of Russia and Japan with martyrdom, and, generally speaking, martyrdom’s role in art and religion as a symbolic transgression of pre-established moral and political values. Furthermore, since Mishima and Eisenstein lived during especially tumultuous and revolutionary eras in their respective countries, this last point will hold particular significance, as martyrdom serves in their works to not only destroy past values along with the martyr’s body but also inaugurates a new set of values obtained by the martyr at the moment of his or her death.

Grace Watson

gwatson@ucla.edu

Majors: Russian Language and Literature; Comparative Literature, UCLA

“Religion and Spirituality in Chekhov’s Works”

Religion is hugely prominent in Chekhov’s body of work, often accompanied by negative connotations through its attachment to intellectually unreliable characters. And, as much as we may try to resist drawing a biographical parallel to the religion that his characters struggle with, there is evidence that suggests a connection there. In the stories, for the most part, religion fluctuates between two modes of representation: tangible and abstract. Through both modes, each story I have focused on indicates a disconnect between Chekhov’s characters and the religion they practice, mainly because the legitimacy of their practice is often arguable. These characters continually misunderstand both the fundamentals and specifics of religion, and, in many cases, they are not even qualified to understand them. Religion in his stories is baffling in its complexity, inaccessible even to those whom other characters perceive as especially pious. At times, it possesses a kind of agency, a character in its own right. It presides over villages in shadows of the church. And church services, rather than being spiritually awakening, weigh down on their participants in a stifling and uncomfortable heat. Both character and reader are constantly reminded of the presence of religion. Though religion in each of these stories is presented in varying degrees of both literary and physical presence, it is nevertheless a constant

aspect of them, whose depiction ultimately introduces and continually reinforces the distinction between religious institution and spirituality itself.

Sonja Magnuson

smagnuson@umail.ucsb.edu

Majors: English; Slavic Languages and Literatures, UCSB

“From Orientalism to Passing: The Influx of Turkish Professionals to Modern Russia”

The boom in Turkish companies working throughout the Russian Federation has resulted in new communities of Turkish expatriates. However, these new communities also face a problem unknown to the various American and Western European businesses that have also taken advantage of the new free-market economy: most do not racially pass for Russian citizens, and are instead commonly mistaken for the stigmatized groups of the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, their experience as expatriates in Russia is distinguished from other Muslims of the former Soviet Union in that many hold professional degrees, but are still viewed through the lens of Orientalism as defined by Edward Said in the 1970s. Using a case study of an engineering firm currently working in St. Petersburg as well as features from the Russian media, I will examine Turkish citizens’ motivations for working in Russia, as well as their experiences as obviously non-Russian citizens and their treatment as citizens of an Islamic country in the post-Chechen war and post-9/11 world.

Greywynn Ann Smith

greywynn@yahoo.com

Major: Literature (Creative Writing). Minor: Russian, UCSB

“The Spirit Banner of Chinggis Khan”

This paper traces the history of the Spirit Banner of Chinggis Khan, the most precious relic of Mongolia. Its sad fate is intertwined with the sadder fate of Russian Mongolian scholar Andrei Dmitrievich Simoukov. The account is largely drawn from the 2010 memoir of Simoukov's nephew, Dmitry Simoukov, *Obratnyj otchyot. Zapiski inyazovtza*. The legendary Black Spirit Banner, honored as the repository of Chinggis Khan’s soul, survived to modern times. In the 17th century, the illustrious Zanabazar, a direct descendent, built a monastery at Barun-Khure where the banner would be preserved. There it remained until 1937, when, over the protests of the lamas who venerated it, the banner was removed. The Mongolian government sent Andrei Simoukov to bring the banner to the Central State Museum in Ulaanbaatar. A trainee named Dendev recounts: “When we arrived, the special lamas who protected the banner came. They said: “We worship [this banner]. It is forbidden to touch the banner with your hands. This is the ongon (spirit) of Chinggis Khan.” Simoukov said the government vowed to preserve the banner and convinced the lamas to relinquish it. Sadly, the banner disappeared amidst the great purges of the nationalists, monks, and intellectuals, and it has never been found. Andrei Simoukov was

arrested in 1939 by NKVD agents for espionage and sent to a labor camp where he died in 1942. No one knows where he is buried. In the 1970s, Simoukov's daughter Natalia learned she had a half-sister, Dorzhpalam, a doctor with three children, in Mongolia.

Braunny Ramirez

braunny.ramirez@ucla.edu

Majors: Linguistics and Asian Languages and Cultures; Russian Studies, UCLA

“*Juche*: The Influence of the Soviet Union Upon the Development of North Korea’s Political Ideology”

After the end of WWII, the United States and Soviet Union freed Korea from Japanese colonial rule and split the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel. The United States headed the southern part of the peninsula, whilst the Soviet Union headed the northern part. The splitting of the Korean peninsula by two powers with different ruling ideologies greatly affected the development of the governments in both parts of the peninsula, causing a democratic south and communist north to rise, ultimately leading to the Korean War in 1950. After the Korean War, both sides of the peninsula were permanently split in two countries: the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea). Both countries established distinctly different ruling ideologies after their established independence at the end of the Korean War. *Juche* is North Korea’s ruling ideology and emphasizes self-reliance and independence from other powers. It was first introduced in North Korea in Kim Il-Sung’s speech of December 1955. Although it is solely credited Kim Il-Sung, *Juche* is extensively based upon many of the Soviet Union’s political ideologies, including Stalin’s Socialism in One Country and, more importantly, Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, the original political ideology in effect at the inception of North Korea was Marxism-Leninism. Kim Il-sung implemented many of the Soviet leaders’ political tactics in order to rule the country of North Korea, including a five-year plan and an emphasis on industry. The effects of the Soviet Union’s influence are still discernible today.