



How is Literature in East-Central Europe and Russia Faring after 1989?

March 19, 2010

PROGRAM

8:30 - 9 am Registration
9 am Welcoming Remarks

9.05am-11.30am

Panel 1: East-Central European and Russian Literature

Moderator: **Igor Pomerantsev** (RFE/RL)

Panelists

Michael Kunichika (Russian Studies, New York University)
Cristina Vatulescu (Comparative Literature, New York University)
Eliot Borenstein (Russian and Slavic Studies, New York University)

11:30am -12:00 Coffee Break

12:00-2:00pm

Panel 2: Czech Literature

Moderator: **Jiri Pehe** (NYU in Prague)

Panelists

Clarice Cloutier (Charles University and NYU in Prague)
Tomas Vrba (NYU in Prague)
Peter Zusi (University College London)

PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Eliot BORENSTEIN received his doctorate in Slavic Languages and Literatures (with a minor in Comparative Literature) from the University of Wisconsin in 1993. After directing the Fulbright Program in the Russian Federation and teaching for two years at the University of Virginia, he moved to New York University, where he served as Chair of the Department of Russian & Slavic Studies for six years, and spent four years as Director of the Morse Academic Plan, the undergraduate general education program for the College of Arts and Sciences at NYU. His first book, *Men without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917-1919*, won the AATSEEL award for best work in literary scholarship in 2000. In 2007, he published *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*, which received the AWSS award for best book in Slavic Gender Studies in 2008. Recently, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to finish the companion volume, *Catastrophe of the Week: Apocalyptic Entertainment in Post-Soviet Russia*.

Clarice CLOUTIER, a well-received lecturer and a translator from Czech, Slovak, Russian and French, currently teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in Central European literature & culture at Charles University in Prague and New York University in Prague, as well as serving as a guest researcher and lecturer at the Universiteit van Amsterdam in The Netherlands. Dr. Cloutier completed her pre-college Slavic studies at Yale University and graduated Magna cum laude with an Honors degree in Russian from Dartmouth College. She subsequently received her M.A. from Princeton University in Russian and Czech Studies and a Master of Studies in Slavonic Studies from the University of Oxford (UK), specializing in 20th Century Czech poetry. In 2005, she received her Ph.D. in Czech Literature at Charles University. Clarice Cloutier has been inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa and Golden Key National Honor Societies and has received the Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn prize for Slavic Studies. She is the author of poetry and has been awarded several prizes for her poetry recitations. Most recently, she has published (together with Bohemist Bronislava Volková) the several-hundred page book entitled *Up the Devil's Back: A Bi-lingual Anthology of 20th Century Czech Poetry* <http://www.slavica.com/newrecent.html> and is currently preparing an anthology of contemporary Slovak prose for the Dalkey Archive Press at the University of Illinois.

Michael KUNICHIKA joined New York University's Department of Russian and Slavic Studies as an Assistant Professor. He earned his B.A. in Russian Literature from Reed College (1999), and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literature from the University of California - Berkeley (2002, 2007). He has previously taught at Amherst College as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian.

His research interests include Russian literary and artistic modernism, with a particular emphasis on the interrelations between the two; silent Russian and Soviet cinema;

Russian critical theory. He has published an article, "Landscape and Vision at the White Sea-Baltic Canal," in *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture* (Yale University Press). He is currently working on a book on the creation of an indigenous antiquity by Russian modernists, writers and artists, which examines how they transformed archaeological artifacts into aesthetic resources for their art and literature.

IGOR POMERANTSEV born in 1948, spent his early years in the Far East of Russia, and later at Soviet Ukraine, Czernovitz – the former Austro-Hungarian cultural oasis of the German-speaking world. In 1979, he moved to London to work for the BBC's Russian Service at Bush House.

Igor Pomerantsev's works include: *Aubades and Serenades*, *Luxury Items*, *Wind Instruments*, *Dry Red*, *Family Status*, *Rado "S"*, and *Radio Lyrics* recently published in Moscow. In addition, he won a prestigious Russian literary prize and was a guest of International Writers Festival in Prague. He currently lives in Prague, where he broadcasts for Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty.

Jiri PEHE, currently Director of New York University in Prague, was Director of the Political Department of Czech President Václav Havel from September 1997 to May 1999. He serves as Chairman of the Program Committee of the Forum 2000 Foundation that organizes annual international conferences under Havel's auspices. From 1995 to 1997, Pehe was Director of Analysis and Research Department at the Open Media Research Institute in Prague. Between 1988 and 1995, he first worked as an analyst of Central European affairs and later as Director of Central European Research at the Research Institute of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich, Germany. From 1985 to 1988, Pehe was Director of East European Studies at Freedom House in New York.

Pehe studied law and philosophy at Charles University in Prague from 1974 to 1978. In 1980, he received a doctorate in law (JUDr.) from the School of Law of Charles University. He fled Czechoslovakia in 1981 and eventually settled in the U.S.A. In 1985 he graduated from the School of International Affairs at Columbia University in New York. Pehe has written hundreds of articles and analytical studies on developments in Eastern Europe for American, Czech, and German periodicals and academic journals. He is a regular contributor to various Czech newspapers and regularly comments on political developments for Czech Television and Radio. He co-authored and edited a book titled *The Prague Spring: A Mixed Legacy*, which was published by Freedom House in 1988. In 2002, his book *Vytunelovaná demokracie* was published by Academia, Prague. Pehe has also contributed essays and chapters to various other books. He teaches at Charles University and New York University in Prague.

Cristina VATULESCU is an assistant professor in the Comparative Literature Department at New York University. Her current project, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film and The Secret Police in Soviet Times*, is due to appear in August 2010 from Stanford University Press. The book explores the relationships between cultural and policing practices in twentieth century Eastern Europe. Taking advantage of the partial opening of the secret police archives in Russia and Romania, Vatulescu focuses on their most infamous holdings-the personal files-as well as on the agency's less known involvement with cinema. Two articles stemming from this project, "Arresting Biographies: The Secret Police File in The Soviet Union and Romania," and "Politics of Estrangement: Tracking Shklovsky's Device in Literary and Policing Practices" have been published in *Comparative Literature and Poetics Today*.

Tomáš VRBA graduated from Charles University with a Ph.D. in philosophy and worked from 1974 to 1977 as a social worker. In 1977, he was a signatory of the Charter 77 human-rights declaration. Through the 80s he worked as an editor of samizdat literature and from November 1989 through the spring of 1990, he was a member of the Občanské Forum (Civic Forum). Editor-in-Chief of the *Lettre Internationale* quarterly (Czech and Slovak edition) from 1990 to 1995, Vrba founded and was president of the AEJ-Association of European Journalists/Czech section in 1993. From 1997 until 2000, he was the Editor-in Chief of the monthly magazine *Nová Přítomnost/The New Presence*; more recently, from 2002 to 2004, he was the Association of European Journalist international Vice President and, until 2007, the Chair of the Czech News Agency Council (ČTK). He is currently President of the Board of Directors at Theater Archa and the Forum 2000 Foundation.

Dr **Peter ZUSI** studied literature at Yale (BA) and comparative literature and social thought at the University of Chicago (MA, PhD), where his original interest in German literature rapidly expanded to include Czech literature in particular and central European literature in general. His doctoral dissertation examined intellectual and ideological functions of the notion of "historicism" in Czech and German avant-gardes in the interwar period. After defending his dissertation he taught for several years in the Slavic department at Harvard. In autumn 2008, he received the NEH fellowship to work on a book about Franz Kafka and Czech modernism. Peter Zusi currently teaches at University College London courses on Czech literature from the eighteenth century to the present, on Central European modernism and contributes to team-taught courses on central and east European literature and cinema.