

THE SOCIETY
for SLOVENE
STUDIES **LETTER**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, FALL 2018

In the previous issue of the newsletter I reported on five goals that we identified at the Society's November 2017 business meeting in Chicago as our top priorities for the 2018 calendar year. I'd like to revisit those goals here, with very brief updates on our progress toward achieving them:

1. Redesign the Society's web site to meet current accessibility standards: Our treasurer Tim Pogačar assumed primary responsibility for decommissioning the old site and for designing and launching the new one, which is compatible with mobile devices. Some stunning original photography was donated for the site by photographer Janez Medvešek. If you haven't yet seen or used the new web site, please visit it at <http://slovenestudies.com> and send us your comments.
2. Establish and document an application process and evaluation criteria for graduate students and other junior Society members seeking travel stipends to present research at major conferences: Completed, with the application process and criteria clearly spelled out on our web site.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

3. Expand and diversify the Society's newsletter: Implemented, as of this issue. We're adding significant heft and interest to the contents and presenting it all in a new format. A regular scholars spotlight will provide informal but informative insights into the research and aspirations of individual members, beginning with this issue's interview with Kristina Reardon. We will also be providing regular updates on the activities of Slovene studies programs at universities across North America. If you don't see your own program represented here, contact us with information for the spring 2019 issue.

4. Conduct a membership drive: Phase 1 is completed, with phase 2 in preparation. Elsewhere in this issue we welcome the 35 new members who have joined the Society over the past six months, mostly from across North America. Thirty-four of our new members joined the Society as a result of outreach by the Society during the membership drive. Phase 2 will involve outreach to members of Slovene American communities in dozens of locales in the U.S. and Canada.

5. Make improvements to the Society's scholarly journal, Slovene Studies: This process has begun, but will require additional steps before we release the new and improved version of the journal with its 2019, no. 2 issue.

Your help with our membership drive is requested. Please recommend acquaintances, colleagues, friends or students who you think would enjoy the benefits of membership and might take an interest in contributing to the Society's efforts in other ways.

As I think you'll agree, the Executive Council has been diligent in pursuing these priorities on behalf of us all. At our annual business meeting, scheduled for Friday, December 7, 2018, from 8:00 to 9:30pm at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel in Boston as part of the annual ASEES convention, we will develop a new slate of goals for the 2019 calendar year. If you'll be at the Convention or in Boston, please come join us then to take part in the discussion, or send your ideas, suggestions and proposals to me in advance at mbiggins@uw.edu.

MICHAEL BIGGINS
PRESIDENT, 2017-2020

FROM THE TREASURER

In addition to keeping up with annual dues, the following members made charitable contributions since July 2018 to the Society's special funds variously designed to incentivize student research on Slovene topics, strengthen the Society's reserves, and advance the formation of thriving academic programs for Slovene studies in North America. We extend a special thanks to these members for their support of these funds:

Printing Fund

Michael Cummins, Charles Debevec, Terence Dragovan,
Joseph Govednik, Marieta Jamsek-Rolnik, David Kromm,
Josef Laposa, Jerry Lomshek, Gojko Stare

Center Fund

Anchito Anzil, Veronica Aplenc, Terence Dragovan,
David Kromm

Rado Lenček Graduate Student Prize Fund

David Kromm, Jerry Lomshek, Warren Mazek, Mary Turvey

Endowment Fund

David Kromm, Marjeta von Rabenau, Karen Zuga

Joseph Velikonja Undergraduate Student Prize Fund

David Kromm, Josef Laposa, Mary Turvey

NEW MEMBERS

The Society for Slovene Studies extends a warm welcome to all of this year's new members. We look forward to future submissions from many of you to our journal *Slovene Studies*, and we encourage you to recommend membership in the Society to your colleagues, friends, and interested students!

John D. Antone
Gašper Beguš
Nina Beguš
Jason Blake
Polona Brooks
Barbara Carlson
Alenka Chapron
Noah Charney
Gordana P. Crnković
Jacob Delbridge
Nives Dolšak
Lindsey Dawn
John Enyeart
Elon Gasper
Edward Gobetz
Marija Horoszowski
Helena Janežič
Frank Jesenko

Jernej Markovc
Milenko Matanović
Douglas McKnight
Alexander Dolšak Prakash
Shirley Ramuta
Margaret M. Rudolf
Sabine Rutar
Jonna Sanders
Miha Sarani
Gerrit Scheepers
Andrew Schirmer
Jared Stever
Marjanca Vižintin
Ronald Zlatoper
Wilhelm Zuercher
Jernej Zupančič
Metka Zupančič

The Society does not have full information on all of this year's new members, but it should be noted that among them are a number undergraduate, graduate and access students (most from the University of Washington, Seattle), a University of Washington faculty linguist (Dr. Beguš) and a UW environmental economist (Dr. Dolšak), both of whose research agendas include Slovene topics, a literary translator (Mr. Blake), a poetry translator (Ms. Carlson), a veteran of OHO, the 1960s-70s Slovene avant-garde art collective, who has since become a pioneer of urban art in the Pacific Northwest (Mr. Matanović), a Slovene art historian (Dr. Charney), a member of the University of Washington's Slavic Department (Dr. Crnković), a Canadian student of Slovene language (Ms. Dawn), a Louis Adamic specialist (Dr. Enyeart), a scholar of Slovene immigration (Dr. Gobetz), the honorary consul for Slovenia in British Columbia (Dr. Rudolf), the honorary consul for Slovenia in Hawaii (Adm. Zlatoper), a historian of late imperial Trieste/Trst (Dr. Rutar), a specialist on Slovene military history (Dr. Sanders), a French and Slovenian literature specialist from the University of Alabama (Dr. Metka Zupančič), a member of the Slovenian Migration Institute (Dr. Vižintin), and a political geographer at the University of Ljubljana (Dr. Jernej Zupančič).

TIMOTHY POGAČAR, SSS TREASURER

THE SOCIETY AT THE ASEEES CONVENTION

Boston MA
Marriott Copley Place Hotel
6-9 December 2018

Meetings, Slovene-
themed Panels, and
Select Yugoslav-
themed Panels of
Interest

Thursday, 6 December 2018, 2:00-3:45pm

A Centennial Reflection on the First Yugoslavia

Chair: Melissa Bokovoy, U. of New Mexico

Presenters: Emily Greble, Vanderbilt U.
Gregor Kranjc, Brock U.
Carol Lilly, U. of Nebraska, Kearney
Momčilo Pavlović, Institute of Contemporary History (Serbia)

Friday, 7 December 2018, 8:00-9:45pm

Society for Slovene Studies Annual Business Meeting

Friday, 7 December 2018, 2:30-4:15pm

Performing Nationalism: Film and Media in Eastern Europe

Chair: Eralda Lameborshi, Stephen F. Austin State U.

Papers: Iva Kosmos, Scientific Research Center SAZU, "Going Beyond Nationalism: Remembering the Yugoslav Everyday in Post-Yugoslav Theatre"
Victoria Lupascu, Pennsylvania State U., "Romanian Music in Transition: Performing Nationalism in Late 1990s and Early 2000s Hip-Hop and Rap"
Emily Graf, Heidelberg U., "A Tale of Two Museums: Performing the Nation in Brecht's Former Residences before and after the Fall of the Berlin Wall"

Discussants: Oana Popescu-Sandu, U. of Southern Indiana
Delia Ungureanu, U. of Bucharest



The Society at the 2018 ASEES Convention

Saturday, 8 December 2018, 1:30-3:15pm

Cultural Transformations in Yugoslavia and Its Successor States, 1950s-1990s

Chair: Josef Djordjevski, UC San Diego

Papers: Zala Pavšič, Independent Scholar, "Remembering Yugoslavia: the Board Game Monopoly and Cultural Memory"

Josef Djordjevski, UC San Diego, "Preserving Yugoslavia: the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage on the Adriatic Coast, 1967-1991"

Discussant: Vjeran Pavlaković, U. of Rijeka

Saturday, 8 December 2018, 3:30-5:15pm

World War II in Southeastern Europe: History and Memory

Chair: Jovana Babović, SUNY Geneseo

Papers: Filip Erdeljac, New York U., "Performers of True Believers: Jewish Croatas in the World War II Ustasha State"

Gregor Kranjc, Brock U., "After the People Were Gone: Rewilding Kočevje in the Wake of the Expulsion of the Gottscheer Germans, 1941-Present."

Vjeran Pavlaković, U. of Rijeka, "Contested Sites and Fragmented Narratives: Jasenovac and Disruptions in Croatia's Commemorative Culture"

Discussant: Jovana Babović, SUNY Geneseo

Sunday, 9 December 2018, 10:00-11:45am

Promoting Slovenia's Interests in the World: Communication, Commerce, Culture and Diplomacy

Chair: Carole Rogel, Ohio State U.

Presenters: Charles Bukowski, Bradley State U.

James Gow, King's College

Olivia Hellewell, U. of Nottingham

Luka Zibelnik, Cleveland State U.

Refracted Revolutions: 1968 in Yugoslavia

Chair: Aleksandar Bošković, Columbia U.

Papers: Ivana Bago, Duke U., "The Time of the Yugoslav 1968, or the Summoning of Origins"

Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson, U. of Chicago, "Radical Play: Ljubljana's Alternative in 1968"

Eliza Rose, Columbia U., "Vertigo of the Real: the Parallel Film Diaries of Vukica Đilas and Józef Robakowski"

Discussant: Branislav Jakovljević, Stanford U.

Sunday, 9 December 2018, 12:00-1:45pm

Translating the Memory-Performance of Childhood

Chair: Michael Biggins, U. of Washington

Papers: Laura Todd, U. of Nottingham, "Anne Frank with a Happy Ending: the Performance(s) of Children's Diaries from the Bosnian War"

Olivia Hellewell, U. of Nottingham, "The Lens of Childhood in the Novels of Goran Vojnović"

Kristina Reardon, College of the Holy Cross, "Performing Childhood Emigration: the Case of a Syrian Refugee in a Slovene Graphic Novel"

Discussant: Michael Biggins, U. of Washington

SLOVENE STUDIES

PROGRAM REPORTS

The latest on Slovene Studies programs throughout North America. Don't see your program? Send us a note - we'd love to include info for Spring 2019.

Ohio State University Slovene Research Initiative (OSU SRI)

Eileen Kunkler, OSU Center for Slavic and East European Studies

In June 2018, Matthew Birkhold, assistant professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at OSU, conducted research in Slovenia for one month as part of the exchange between OSU and the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). Professor Birkhold is researching the cultural history of ice, in particular in the Alps and the Triglav glacier in Slovenia. During his month in Slovenia, Professor Birkhold worked with numerous colleagues at the Anton Melik Geographical Institute, who helped him to identify useful documents and productive avenues of research; he also made extensive use of the excellent libraries and archives.

Based upon his initial work in Slovenia, Professor Birkhold presented a paper at the German Studies Association Conference in September and a chapter in his upcoming book will also focus on this work.

In spring 2019, OSU will host Aleksej Kalc of the Slovenian Migration Institute of ZRC SAZU.



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Slovene Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle

Veronica Muskheli and Cyrus Rodgers, PhD Candidates, Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Washington, Seattle

The 2018-19 academic year at the University of Washington, Seattle, got off to a lively start with a series of four Slovene-themed public events during October alone. Through its UW-University of Ljubljana Scholars Exchange program, UW welcomed two prominent scholars from Slovenia—Professors Katarina and Marko Marinčič of the University of Ljubljana. Katarina Marinčič is a specialist in modern French literature and herself one of the most celebrated contemporary fiction writers in Slovenia. Her husband Marko Marinčič is a Classics scholar and an award-winning Slovene literary translator of ancient Greek and Latin poetry and drama. Two events highlighted their visit to Seattle: at a talk on October 5, Marko Marinčič presented his research on the image of Ovid's third wife in his exile poetry and on October 12, Katarina Marinčič read from her collection of three novelettes *O treh* (Three) and discussed her writing and its translation in a public interview with the collection's English translator, UW Professor Michael Biggins.

The talk by Marko Marinčič titled “Ovid’s Wife and the Limits of Fiction” was attended by some 25 faculty members and students of the UW Classics Department and generated a lively discussion, prompted by the researcher’s provocative notion that Ovid actually courted Empress Livia through addressing his wife—a cousin of Livia—in *Tristia* and *Pontic Letters*. A ripple of bemused laughter rose from the audience when Marinčič suggested that Ovid played with the notion of becoming Livia's third husband. Marinčič explored the images of Ovid's wife and Livia in the works in terms of the poet's rhetorical strategies, positioning his wife as a new Penelope and himself as a new Homer, and paying backhanded compliments when referring to Livia as a “living monster of virtue.” Considering the audience of specialists, Marinčič

did not have to explain the circumstances of Ovid's exile, but surprising to the public was the Roman character of Ljubljana, known as Emona in ancient times—images of Ljubljana's Roman monuments presented by Marinčič generated considerable interest.

Similar in size of audience, the attendees of the reading by Katarina Marinčič were more familiar with Slovenia. Members of the UW Slavic Languages and Literatures Department and *Slovenska miza* in Seattle reacted with understanding chuckles when Michael Biggins introduced the author as one of the most un-Slovene contemporary writers in the country. The reference was not only to her cosmopolitan themes but to a certain joyfulness in her writing which contrasts with the predominantly minor keys more typical of Slovene literature. Spanning millenia, *Three* deals with the joy and pain of life as a universal human experience. Marinčič read from the first novelette about a man of an ancient Etruscan family, transporting the audience to a lake shore in the 5th century BCE where the hero, still as a boy, was training his hunting dog. In the next excerpt, the hero of the second novelette, who would later become a celebrated botanical artist in 18th-century France, visited a sick old man who had retained his appetite for life. In the last novelette, the most Slovenian of the three because of its Slovene setting and tragic ending, Marinčič explained that Zlatko, the hero based on a distant relative of the author, went to America in the 1970s to cure his blindness. She pointed out that the works had been influenced by her interest in autobiography and that the personal and the documentary fused for her in the texts.

Some of the questions from the audience and her interviewer addressed such autobiographical aspects through inquiries about the influence of French literature on her.

Slovene Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle (continued)

Marinčič recognized Proust as a stylistic influence and declared not to be intimidated by the greats or by pressure to write about women, and not men. Marinčič also recognized Michael Biggins as a translator “faithful in unfaithfulness to me,” acknowledging the high quality of the English translation of *Three*, which is currently in search of its American publisher. The discussions continued during a reception that followed with a lively conversation about family (the Marinčičes have two not quite adult sons), and the role of literature and translation in our lives.

As UW prepares to celebrate in 2019 the 40th anniversary of our continuous annual exchange of scholars with the University of Ljubljana, the UW-based faculty committee overseeing the exchange hosted an October 18, 2018 open house designed to bring the exchange to the attention of researchers campus-wide. Seven past UW participants from departments spanning the entire campus delivered brief presentations on their Ljubljana exchange experience and its ongoing impacts, including long-term collaborations with their Slovene colleagues. Throughout the exchange’s 40-year history, representation on both sides has been highly multidisciplinary, involving fields as diverse as Aeronautical Engineering, Physics, Forestry, Medicine, Law, Political Science, Classics and English, not to mention Slavic Languages and Literatures (of course) and more than twenty others. The presentations demonstrated an obvious shared passion for the exchange and its impacts. These seven participants’ involvement in the program endures as they encourage future participants to add to an already impressive record of collaborations and accomplishments. During calendar year 2018, in addition to hosting visits to Seattle by Professors Katarina Marinčič (Romance Languages), Marko Marinčič (Classics) and Andrej Blejcek (Biostatistics), UW sent exchange participants representing UW Choral Music (PhD candidate Gerrit Scheepers) and Sociology (Dr. Sara Tomczuk).

The exchange is an academic and cultural bridge between the two universities that has also played a role in facilitating a flourishing relationship between Washington State and Slovenia. On the strength of the UW – U. of Ljubljana exchange and the UW Slovene Studies program we were honored in 2015 by a visit from Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar. Two years later, in 2017 we received a visit from Gorazd Žmavc, the Republic of Slovenia’s Minister for Slovenes Abroad. This year (2018) we welcomed Slovene Ambassador to the United States Stanislav Vidovič. At a gala event on October 19th Ambassador Vidovič officially announced the opening of the Slovenian consulate in Seattle – the first ever in Washington State – and the appointment of UW’s Michael Biggins as Honorary Consul. The reception held to mark the event was well attended by UW students of Slovene, UW faculty with research and other academic connections to Slovenia, members of Seattle’s Slovene-American community, and members of the Consular Association of Washington, an organization of Seattle-based consular officers and other diplomats. Opening the event, members of the UW Choral Singers under the direction of Dr. Geoffrey Boers performed two songs – one Estonian and one American – followed by a third, a performance of the first song in the UW Choir’s new Slovene repertory, by Jacobus Gallus, under the direction of Gerrit Scheepers.

Finally, this fall we were delighted to welcome Prof. Gašper Beguš to UW. With a recent PhD in Linguistics from Harvard, Prof. Beguš will be teaching courses in phonology and historical linguistics and pursuing a broad portfolio of research topics that includes Slovene linguistics. Gašper is joined by his wife Nina, who is at present completing her Harvard PhD dissertation in comparative literature, and their two children Tomaž and Lenart.

Slovene Studies at the University of Kansas

Marc L. Greenberg

Director, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

The University of Kansas continues its decades-long engagement with various aspects of scholarship in Slovene studies and interaction with institutions in Slovenia. While most of the scholarly and teaching activity goes on in the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, we are pleased to report on a new initiative in the KU School of Business: The Slovenia Program of the Business Leadership Program and the SELF Engineering Leadership Fellows Program is designed to provide students with a unique opportunity to learn about the business and engineering practices of Slovenia as a key location in Eastern Europe. KU engineering and business students have visited Slovenia in May 2016, May 2017, and May 2018. The Program is already planning the Slovenia 2019 event. The program is led by Dr. John Hedeman in the KU School of Business and Slovene lecturer Marta Pirnat-Greenberg provides cultural and linguistic background to the students before departure.

The Slovene program in all its facets has been encouraged and supported by Ms. Barbara Koval-Nelson, Honorary Consul of the Republic

of Slovenia in Kansas City, who also has served as one of the founding members of the Advisory Board of the School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures at KU. Among other things, Ms. Koval-Nelson has brought two ambassadors of Slovenia to the US to visit KU to become acquainted with KU's Slovene programming, Samuel Žbogar and Božo Cerar.

Notably, KU alumnus Dr. Bruce Berglund (KU History PhD '99, St. Peter, MN), who studied Slovene and Czech at KU with Prof. Greenberg, recently published a book on the great Slovene architect Jože Plečnik, *Castle and Cathedral in Modern Prague : Longing for the Sacred in a Skeptical Age* (CEU Press, 2017). His research involved archival work in both Slovenia and the Czech Republic requiring a deep reading knowledge of both languages.

Chair of the Slavic Department Stephen M. Dickey, a leading expert on Slavic verbal aspect, frequently includes data and analysis of Slovene aspect in his articles and books. Most recently he published "On the History of Prefixed



Imperfective Motion Verbs in Slavic" in the book that he edited with Mark Richard Lauersdorf, *V zeleni drželi zeleni breg: Studies in Honor of Marc L. Greenberg*, which will appear towards the end of 2018 from Slavica Publishers. The cover of the Festschrift includes an original photograph by the outstanding Slovene photographer Aleš Maučec of the village Vučja Gomila in the region where Professor Greenberg conducted fieldwork in the 1980s. The volume contains articles on various aspects of Slavic and Balkan languages, including articles focusing on

Slovene Studies at the University of Kansas (continued)

Slovene by Professors Victor A. Friedman (Chicago), Robert D. Greenberg (Auckland), Brian D. Joseph (Columbus, Ohio), Marko Jesenšek (Maribor), Nada Šabec (Maribor), and Marko Snoj (Ljubljana).

In October 2018 Prof. Vitaly Chernetsky participated in the “Go East!” conference, the first ever international conference on LGBTQ lit. in Eastern Europe, held at the U. of Ljubljana, with his paper, “In Search of Territories of Freedom: Ivan Kozlenko’s Tanzher and the Queer Challenge to the Ukrainian Canon.” While in Ljubljana Prof. Chernetsky represented KU in formalizing decades of collaboration with a Memorandum of Agreement between KU and the Filozofska fakulteta of the University of Ljubljana. He also brought back many books for the KU Libraries collection. Also this year KU signed an MOU with the University of Nova Gorica.

Ms. Marta Pirnat-Greenberg continues to serve as the lecturer in Slovene and BCMS at the University of Kansas, which has remained robust even as interest in the Western South Slavic languages waxes and wanes nationally. Her book, *Colloquial Slovene* (Routledge, 2011) continues to have steady sales.

Prof. Marc L. Greenberg, Director of KU’s School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, was honored by his election as a Corresponding Member of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts in May 2017. His most recent publications concerning Slovene include “Slavic Dialectology: A Survey of Research since 1989” (co-authored with Krzysztof Borowski, Joseph Schallert, and Curt Woolhiser) in the 25th anniversary edition of the *Journal of Slavic Linguistics*, “Slavs as Migrants. Mapping Prehistoric Language Variation” in the *Festschrift for Janneke Kalsbeek* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2017), “Slavic” in *The Indo-European Languages* (ed. By Mate Kapović; Routledge, 2017), *The Slavic Area: Trajectories, Borders, Centres, and Peripheries in the Second World* in *Globalising Sociolinguistics: Challenging and Expanding Theory* (ed. by Dick Smakman and Patrick Heinrich; Taylor & Francis, 2015), and “George L. Trager’s Field Notes on the Prekmurje Dialect Spoken in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA” in the *Festschrift for Ludwig Karničar* (Graz: Leykam, 2014). Currently he is Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopedia of Slavic Languages and Linguistics*, scheduled for publication in 2021 (print and electronic editions) by Brill Publishers, Leiden, Netherlands. In October 2018 he was invited to give lectures at Waseda University in Tokyo and the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University, where he discussed his work on South Slavic historical dialectology.



An Interview with Kristina Reardon

Veronica Muskheli

Kristina Reardon, a PhD candidate in comparative literature at the University of Connecticut and the Society's Secretary since 2014, was recently awarded a **\$12,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** to translate a Slovenian novel into English. The 2007 *Nebesa v robidah: roman v zgodbah* or, as Kristina has translated the title, *Blackberry Heaven: A Novel in Stories* is by Nataša Kramberger, a writer from Maribor. Society member Veronica Muskheli (PhD candidate, Slavic languages and literatures, University of Washington) spoke with Kristina recently about her translation work and the award. Below is a recreation of their conversation from early November 2018.

Veronica Muskheli: Kristina, first of all, congratulations on receiving this prestigious award! Our readers would like to find out more about the novel itself, its author, and of course, the story of how you have chosen the text, and what the process of grant application has been like for you.

Kristina Reardon: Veronica, thank you. It is a rather unusual text. Often sections of the novel read like prose poems. I find it lyrical, and it was just beautiful to read—that's what motivated me from the start to want to spend more time with the text. And even though it's poetic, the book still has the traditional features of fiction—plot movement and character development—which keep its readers engaged. The novel centers on the intertwining narrative of an unlikely pair: a young Slovene student named Jana and an Italian grandfather named Bepi. Their life experiences differ significantly, but they are united by a common place and time: Events of the novel take place in the present-day Amsterdam. That is where their paths intersect as they navigate it as two outsiders.

VM: Could you say more about these characters?

KR: Jana comes to Amsterdam to study and becomes the caretaker of a small Chinese-African child. As she takes him through the city, she reflects on her life in Slovenia—first as a Yugoslav, then as a Slovene citizen. Rather than distract from the Amsterdam storyline, these memories enrich it. They often provide moments of humor, such as when Jana recalls what it was like to both sign up for religious education and to become one of the last generation of children trained as a "Yugoslav Pioneer." Jana's memories color her home village both with nostalgia as she recalls its beauty and with disdain as she works through the more difficult elements of living in a rural Yugoslav environment.

Bepi, on the other hand, has a vastly different experience. He was born between the two world wars in an Italian fishing village. He recalls the loss of his parents—the mystery of which remains a repressed memory—and he thinks back on his time in Italy. Much like Jana, he has an intense relationship with a child. He is the primary caretaker for his seven-year-old granddaughter, whose mother lives in India. The characters meet at an open market in Amsterdam at three in the afternoon on the day on which the final section of the novel is set, and the various threads of the story are cinched tightly together.

VM: This sounds like a fascinating premise. Is that what also attracted you to the work?

continued, next page

"I find [the novel] lyrical, and it was just beautiful to read - that's what motivated me from the start to want to spend more time with the text."

Kristina Reardon interview, continued

KR: Yes, besides the strength of Kramberger's prose, it was Jana's character that motivated me to pursue translation of this novel. Jana's perspective as a member of the in-between generation of Slovenes is unique in its representation of Slovene life. The memories of Slovenia and Yugoslavia provide a rich background for Jana's development, but Kramberger moves beyond the mere pastiche of images of two nations to work through the consequences of a bifurcated identity. In addition, the fact that Jana has migrated to Amsterdam to study speaks to one issue in the post-Yugoslav world which many authors evade or simply do not discuss: the marked lack of professional opportunities in Slovenia, which has left young people like Jana searching for something more beyond its borders. Jana's perspective resonates with the perspectives of many of my friends and acquaintances at or around her same age in Slovenia.

VM: That brings the question of the work's reception in Slovenia. Has it been recognized in its own country?

KR: Yes. And not only in Slovenia. The novel was shortlisted for the 2008 Kresnik Award for best novel in Slovenia, and in 2010 it was awarded the European Union Prize for Literature! An important academic literary critic in Slovenia today, Dr. Alojzija Zupan Sosič of the University of Ljubljana, describes the prose and perspective of the novel as kaleidoscopic in nature; she writes that Kramberger has a "way of looking at the world which discolors, disassociates and rearranges the world in lyrically colored fragments."

Reception in the press has also been extremely positive in all of the major Slovene newspapers and literary journals. The *Sodobnost* critic called the work vivid and lively and compared it to jazz. The *Večer* critic, meanwhile, cited Kramberger's warmth and humor. The *Literatura* critic found the narrator's voice bold and independent. *Nebesa v robidah* has been translated

into eight languages in the past six years: Serbian, Bulgarian, Czech, Macedonian, Dutch, Croatian, Italian, and Albanian.

VM: As I recall, your dissertation deals with Spanish, Italian, and Slovenian female narratives about war experiences. You are obviously interested in female voices. Did the fact that the author is a woman play a role in your selection of the text to translate?

KR: Yes, of course. Moreover, female authors are grossly underrepresented in translation, not only in Slovenia but globally. I specifically seek out opportunities to translate female authors. And I find this project particularly meaningful because the novel is written by a woman and because it has a woman as its central character.

VM: So, how did you find out about this novel?

KR: It was Tanja Petrič, one of the editors of *Litterae Slovenicae* Series at a Slovenian printing house, who initially brought Kramberger's novel to my attention.

VM: I recognize Tanja's name. Isn't she also the one who runs the Slovenian government-sponsored translators' workshop?

KR: Yes. She is the coordinator for the International Slovenian Literature Translation Seminar under the auspices of the Slovenian Book Agency, which is a government agency. In June of 2017, I attended the seminar. It was in Maribor that summer. It was a fantastic experience! And she observed my work there. She later approached me with a suggestion that I translate the novel.

VM: Wonderful! Does it mean that you already have a publishing house all lined up to release your translation once you are done with it? The one that has a program with the Latin-sounding name?

KR: Yes, *Litterae Slovenicae* publishes translations from Slovenian into other languages. And yes, once the novel is translated, it is supposed to be published in Ljubljana.

Kristina Reardon interview, continued

VM: Are you on a deadline with the publishing house?

KR: Yes. The translation is due on January 1, 2020. But finding time to work on the translation has been an issue for me because I am a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, currently finishing my dissertation, and I also work at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, teaching writing and acting as associate director of the Center for Writing. The Slovenian Book Agency has offered a small stipend for the translation, but it was not enough for me to take time off from teaching. That is why the NEA award is such an important part of the project—it now allows me to take time off to focus on the translation.

VM: Has SSS been in any way involved with your application? Perhaps letters of recommendation, for example? Or initially, when you attended the translators' seminar, did it help with your travel expenses?

KR: I'm so grateful to the SSS for supporting my translation work over the past several years—and particularly to two SSS members, Michael Biggins and Marta Pirnat-Greenberg. Michael brought the NEA grant to my attention originally, and I'm very grateful to Marta Pirnat-Greenberg of the University of Kansas for writing my recommendation letter and for helping me write my cover letter and application for the grant.

Marta has known me for a long time. Because UConn, where I am a doctoral student, did not offer Slovene, I worked with Marta for eight semesters (from 2012-2016) via a distance arrangement with the University of Kansas while I was still in coursework for my Ph.D. She was such a wonderful teacher, patiently correcting grammar and explaining how and why particular grammatical concepts work differently in Slovene than in English. If I had not worked with her, I would not be in a position to read and translate Slovene fiction. I am confident in saying that anything I do well in my speaking, reading, and writing in Slovene I owe to her. (And anything I mess up is my fault alone). In our weekly lessons, we read short stories related to World War I for my dissertation, and then we began the task of translating some of them. She has helped me by not only checking my translated texts for accuracy but by helping me come up with creative solutions to tricky issues in translations, and several have been published, such as Polona Glavan's "Anton" in *World Literature Today* in 2014 and Leonora Flis's "Zeroes" in the same magazine in 2017.

In 2016, the SSS provided a scholarship so that I could enroll via distance agreement in a translation seminar at the University of Washington, taught by Dr. Michael Biggins. I was so grateful for that opportunity to connect with students who Skyped in from Washington and the UK and Germany. Michael provided incisive, constructive feedback that helped me improve as a translator. I completely changed my methods for translation after that seminar. Before, I kept a book propped up next to my computer and simply worked through the lines, typing in English. Now, I retype each sentence from the original Slovene into one column. Then I write the English translation in a middle column. In a third column I keep notes and questions about things I need to double check. It takes me longer to do, but I am far more organized now and more accurate. In addition, the act of retyping the original—while time consuming—helps me understand the text more deeply.

VM: And this progress has obviously been recognized both with the offer to translate the Kramberger novel and the NEA grant to support this translation. How long did it take from the application to the notification of the award?

KR: I applied for it in January 2018, and then this fall I received the good news that they awarded it to me.

VM: Have you started on the translation already? How big is the novel? How many pages?

KR: It's probably around 250 pages. And no, I haven't really started in earnest. I have only translated about ten pages. One requirement for my grant application was to submit a sample translation.

Kristina Reardon interview, continued

VM: I'm sure it is enough for you to realize what challenges this text may have for you in terms of understanding all the nuances of the source language. I know that you are a heritage speaker of Slovenian, and that you have studied the language here in the US, and in Slovenia. For example, you were at the University of Ljubljana as a Fulbright Scholar in 2010-2011. From taking Michael's class with you, I have an impression that you speak Slovenian absolutely fluently. Do you still have to consult native speakers about words or contexts?

KR: Thank you for the compliment, but I still have to work on improving my Slovenian. And, yes, I do sometimes consult native speakers. I have maintained my contacts with four friends from my Fulbright visit, ever since we co-translated some short stories together in Ljubljana. They are a great source of information when I am not sure about something. But mostly I consult my mom—she has the most patience. But I also talk to my grandma sometimes and to a cousin in Slovenia, especially when I encounter certain regional terms.

VM: Could you give us an example of a situation like that with this particular text?

KR: Hmm. Nothing comes to mind (yet!) with this text. I'm still in the beginning stages of translating. But last year, "na prvo žogo" appeared in a text I was translating in a translation seminar, and I knew enough to know that the literal translation was not the right one. On the first ball? It wasn't a baseball text, so I asked my mother, who wasn't sure. I asked my cousin in Kočevje, who said she wasn't 100 percent clear on what it really meant in the particular context either. But she sort of figured it out after Googling it and directed me to razvezanijezik.org, which is sort of like a tamer, less extensive version of Urban Dictionary. It helped me to see some other examples in context. In the text, the phrase was being used to refer to "the first time" something happened. The three of us had a text conversation going about this for almost a day. They love to debate linguistic terms with me—lucky for me!

VM: It's wonderful that you have such an extensive support group among Slovenian native speakers. And yet, with translation, usually the

biggest challenge is not in the source language—it is transforming the original into the equivalent English.

KR: Oh, absolutely. Kramberger is not easy to translate. It is not just experimentation with the genre—she writes long sentences with many clauses which often seem to fold in on themselves. At the same time, she maintains a sense of rhythm that allows the reader to distinguish observation from dialogue. As I translate these, I attempt to preserve the length of the original, but I anticipate either cutting several sentences in half or adding additional punctuation for clarity, since English does not have the case endings which make the subjects and objects clear in Slovene. Kramberger's approach is grounded but poetic, so my philosophy is to approach the text in a way that preserves the structure and sound of the original. This often means studying the cadence of a sentence, particularly when repetition is involved, so that I could find analogs in English, which approximate the syllable count of the original to maintain the sense of rhythm that facilitates a clear reading experience.

In general, as a translator, I see translation, in its best moments, as the act of transposition that Arthur Schopenhauer describes when he writes that "the most nearly perfect translation will at best relate to the original in the same way that a musical piece relates to its transposition into another key." Of course, it's nearly impossible to find direct equivalents for words and phrases, but I seek to recreate the original in a way that maintains the same tempo and dynamics of the original—albeit in the key of English.

VM: This is a wonderful analogy! I can tell that all your translating courses and your previous translating experiences indeed have given you skills to achieve this ideal transformation. Kristina, congratulations again on getting the award! I wish you a productive and fun year translating this remarkable novel!

KR: Thank you for your confidence in my skills and your interest in this translation project and for the good wishes!

2019 Midwest Slavic Conference



**The Ohio State University
April 5-7, 2019**

The Midwest Slavic Association and The Ohio State University (OSU) Center for Slavic and East European Studies (CSEES) are pleased to announce the **2019 Midwest Slavic Conference** to be held at OSU in Columbus, OH on April 5-7, 2019. Conference organizers invite proposals for panels or individual papers addressing all topics related to the theme “1989 and its Effects on Central and Eastern Europe”. Preceding this year’s conference, Dr. Dorin Uritescu (York University) will present the 22nd Annual Kenneth E. Naylor Memorial Lecture, entitled “Geolinguistic Variation and Language Change in Romanian,” on Friday, April 5th at 4:00PM. The conference will then open at 5:30PM with a keynote address by Dr. Vitaly Chernetsky (U. of Kansas) that will focus on cultural representations of the fall of Communism in Ukraine and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Building on the keynote address, a plenary panel focusing on the larger political, economic, and social impacts of 1989 will follow on Saturday morning. Panels by conference participants will then commence on Saturday from 10:45AM-5:30PM and Sunday from 8:30AM-12:30PM.

Please send a one-paragraph abstract and a brief C.V. in a single PDF format file to csees@osu.edu by January 14th. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to participate.

Please note that the conference will not provide any lodging for any participants. Undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to apply for travel grants to cover all travel costs. Please email csees@osu.edu if any documentation is needed to apply for funds.

More information is available at the [Conference website](#).

DEADLINES

Abstract and C.V. Deadline: **January 14**

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Final Papers to Committee and Presenter Registration Deadline: **March 22**

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Kristina Reardon,

Secretary, Society for Slovene Studies

148 Russell Street #3, Worcester, MA 01609

kristina.reardon@gmail.com.



Introducing the new *Letter* Editor, Taylor Cluff

Lepo pozdravljeni! I'm excited to be joining the SSS team in working to expand and improve the content we provide through the semiannual *Letter*.

My first exposure to Slovenia came as I served as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 2007-2009, during which time I was able to live and work in Celje, Maribor, Novo Mesto, Kranj, and Ljubljana. The crash course in dialects was an adventure, and I ended up adopting something of a *dolenjski naglas* in the end.

I came home eager to learn more about Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia, and earned my MA from Ohio State in Slavic and East European Studies. My first job out of school was at the Slovenian embassy in Washington, DC, under former Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar. Since that time I've worked in higher education administration while enjoying freelance translation work in my spare time.

I look forward to getting to know more Society members over the course of my time in this role. Please feel free to contact me at tdcluff@gmail.com with any suggestions or with content for our next issue, coming Spring 2019.