

[Home](#)



Newsletter

Volume 21, no. 1, June 2004

Editor: Dr. Nicolae Harsanyi

108 Pinegate Cir. #9
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Ph: 919-490-5221
Email: niki@ga.unc.edu

Consultants:

Dr. Marcel Cornis-Pope
Virginia Commonwealth University
Dept. of English
Richmond, VA 23284-2005

Anca Luca Holden
University of Georgia
Comparative Literature
Athens, GA 30602

Dr. Jeanine Teodorescu-Regier
Lexington College
Chicago, IL 60607

The RSAA Newsletter is published twice a year.

RSAA YEAR BOOK: Dr. Paul Teodorescu, Editor in Chief

307 Pueblo Drive
Salinas, CA 93906

REMINDER: All RSAA members who have changed their mailing address and institutional affiliation, or who now also have an e-mail address, are kindly requested to update these data by contacting the editor. Unpaid yearly dues (\$15.00, payable to RSAA) are to be sent to Anca-Elena L. Holden, 40 Greenwich Hill, Belchertown, MA 01007.

Romanian Studies Association of America--Annual Meeting

MLA, San Diego, California 2003

Del Mar Room, San Diego-Mariott

Date: Dec. 12, 2003

MINUTES

Present: Jeanine Teodorescu, Valentina Glajar, Monica Grecu, Letitia Guran, Gratiela Dobrescu, Anca Holden, Peter Christensen, Domnica Radulescu.

The RSAA meeting started at 5:30 PM in the Del Mar Room, following the panel organized by the Romanian Discussion Group. Jeanine Teodorescu opened up the meeting by greeting and welcoming all participants. Domnita Dumitrescu and Noemi Marin, two RSAA members who had made plans to attend the meeting were regretfully absent, due to unforeseen circumstances (a serious case of flu and urgent personal matters). Thus, Noemi could not be Nicolae Harsanyi's proxy as it had been planned.

Jeanine brought up the points on the agenda sent out via e-mail on 12/17/03.

1. Approval of last year's minutes (including the corrective administrative changes made after the meeting in December 2002).

2. RSAA Dues/Initiatives.

Upon the suggestion made by several participants, the dues were increased to \$15 per year. Jeanine presented Anca Munteanu's suggestion to set up a cash prize for the best paper presented at the MLA. Valentina Glajar suggested a prize for the best article published by an RSAA panelist. However, the participants came to the conclusion that the association cannot afford the expense. Monica Grecu suggested the setting up of a non-monetary award/certificate. This idea needs to be further thought out and discussed.

3. RSAA bylaws

Jeanine brought up the need to update the bylaws of the RSAA. Participants agreed that it would be best to receive suggestions and comments from RSAA members. They could send e-mails to Jeanine and Anca by February 20. Alexandra Gruzinska will be contacted, since she contributed to the last changes to the RSAA bylaws, as well as Nicolae Harsanyi.

4. New Positions on the Board. Elections. Executive Board Committee.

Secretary/Treasurer of the RSAA.

a) At the end of two terms (four years each) filled by Nicolae Harsanyi, this position became vacant in December 2003. The participants expressed their gratitude for his exemplary work during his tenure as Secretary/Treasurer (collection of dues and RSAA budget) and hoped that he would be willing to continue to help our organization as Editor of the Newsletter of the Romanian Studies Association of America as he has done for many years. Niki's writing and publishing of the Newsletter has increased the visibility of our organization. Because of his considerable experience, his advice regarding administrative work will also be greatly appreciated.

b) Participants voted Anca Holden as new Secretary-Treasurer.

Jeanine will contact Niki regarding the RSAA account he has been managing in order to ask him to close it and to transfer the funds into the new account which will be opened by Anca. The books of the activity of the account will also be transferred to Anca

c) The participants agreed that the Executive Board Committee will have the following members:

President (elected for two years).

Liaison Officer (elected for 2 years, after which he/she becomes President).

Secretary/Treasurer (elected for 3 years starting with Jan. 2004).

Chair of the Romanian Discussion Group (elected for 1 year).

Deputy Chair for the Romanian Discussion Group (elected for 1 year, after which he/she becomes

Chair).

5. Jeanine indicated the need for all members to have free access to the names of the RSAA members, and to know the amount of money held in the RSAA as well as its management and disposition.
6. Various positions and offices in the RSAA were discussed and clarified: Peter Christensen's and Domnica Radulescu's input was helpful on this topic. The participants agreed that:
The RSAA President will hold office for 2 years.
The Liaison Officer will hold office for two years, after which he/she becomes RSAA President.
The Secretary/Treasurer for 3 years (instead of 4) in order to provide continuity in the affairs of the RSAA and the MLA after the election of a new President.

RSAA Executive Board Committee members for 2004:

RSAA President: Jeanine Teodorescu (2003-2004)

MLA Liaison: Valentina Glajar (2003-2004)

Secretary/Treasurer: Anca Holden (2004-2006)

Chair (Discussion Group): Letitia Guran (2004)

Deputy Chair: Peter Christensen (2004)

7. The RSAA website:

Domnica Radulescu offered to set up an additional website for the RSAA. Jeanine encouraged all present to exchange ideas about ways to promote the RSAA to interested university programs, departments, and individuals; it was enthusiastically acknowledged that a new website should be of great help regarding this matter.

8. 2004 MLA sessions and topics for sessions were discussed:

Letitia Guran (2004 Chair of the Romanian Discussion Group): "Constructing Post-Communist Eastern Europe: New Faces of the Imaginary." Co-Chair: Peter Christensen.

Roxana Verona: "Paris as Promised Land: Francophilia in Eastern Europe."

Domnica Radulescu: "Eastern European Women as Creators of Humor--Culture, Literature, and Film."

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30.

Minutes submitted by Anca L. Holden Jan. 24, 2004.

LETTER FROM THE RSAA PRESIDENT

Dear RSAA friends,

We are delighted to welcome our new members and hope that our membership will increase even more in the fall. We also expect to have a very exciting end-of-the-year meeting in Philadelphia.

In a few months all current members will receive the RSAA bylaws and will have an opportunity to make suggestions and comments which will be considered by the Executive Committee and voted upon during the RSAA December meeting at the MLA Convention in Philadelphia.

During the same meeting, there will be discussions regarding the re-publication of the RSAA Journal (which stopped its publication more than 10 years ago). It will be wonderful to have a journal again in which our panelists will have the opportunity to publish articles based on their presentations at MLA Conventions.

Our Executive Committee is also considering affiliations to various other organizations, such as the Rocky Mountains Modern Language Association (RMMLA), suggested by Professor Aleksandra Gruzinska. These affiliations will be beneficial to all of us and will open up more opportunities for members--of both associations--to take part in additional panels during other conventions.

We wish you a happy summer vacation and look forward to your participation during the RSAA meetings and MLA sessions.

Warm regards,

Jeanine Teodorescu -- President
Anca Holden -- Secretary/Treasurer

2004 MLA Convention, Philadelphia, PA, 27-30 December 2002

Paris as Promised Land: Francophilia in Eastern Europe.

Panel organized by RSAA

Organizer: Roxana Verona, Dartmouth College

Chair: Marianne Hirsch, Professor, Department of English, Columbia University.

1. "Panait Istrate, Francophile," Roxana Verona, Dartmouth College.
2. "From Brasov to Paris: Brassai's visions of 1930s' Paris," Sylvie Blum-Reid, University of Florida, Gainesville.
3. "Paris meets Prague: The Reception and Representation of the Eiffelka," Martha Kuhlman, Bryant College, Smithfield, RI.
4. "Paris in the Dialogue Between Two Bulgarian Poets Athanas Dalchev and Lachez Stanchev and the South-East European Literary Context of the 1920's," Roumiana Stancheva, Balkan Institute, Sofia.

Respondent:

Jeanine Teodorescu, Lexington College, Chicago, IL.

Constructing Post-communist Eastern Europe: New Faces of the Imaginary

Panel organized by the Discussion Group on Romanian Studies

Organizer and Chair: Letitia Guran, University of Georgia, Athens.

1. "Literary and Cultural Reconstruction after 1989: Postmodernism, Postcommunism, Postcoloniality," Marcel Cornis Pope, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
2. "Ninotchka's Return: Exiles Past and Present from Lubitsch to Boym," Peter G. Christensen, Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI.
3. "Constructing Post-communist Eastern-Europe through Criticism: Perspectives and Polemics," Letitia Guran, University of Georgia, Athens.
4. "Photographs in Transition: Dubravka Ugresic's 'Museum of Unconditional Surrender'," Monica Popescu, Penn State University.
5. "Barbarism Re-inscribed: The Yugoslav Wars as Travelogue," Zoran Samardzija, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

Eastern European Women as Creators of Humor--Culture, Literature, and Film

Panel organized by RSAA

Organizer: Domnica Radulescu, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA.
(The list of panelists and the titles of their papers were not available at press time.)

BOOKS BY RSAA MEMBERS

History of the literary cultures of East Central Europe, Vol. 1, edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004, xx, 648 pp.

National literary histories based on internally homogeneous native traditions have significantly contributed to the construction of national identities, especially in multicultural East-Central Europe, the region between the German and Russian hegemonic cultural powers stretching from the Baltic states to the Balkans. History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe, which covers the last two hundred years, reconceptualizes these literary traditions by de-emphasizing the national myths and by highlighting analogies and points of contact, as well as hybrid and marginal phenomena that traditional national histories have ignored or deliberately suppressed. The four volumes of the History configure the literatures from five angles: (1) key political events, (2) literary periods and genres, (3) cities and regions, (4) literary institutions, and (5) real and imaginary figures. The first volume, which includes the first two of these dimensions, is a collaborative effort of more than fifty contributors from Eastern and Western Europe, the US, and Canada. Because the individual price of this volume is quite high (\$238.00), RSAA members are invited to advise their institutional libraries to order a copy of this title so that the book may become truly accessible.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Arta Lucescu Boutcher, *Rediscovering Benjamin Fondane*, New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt/M., Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2003, VIII, 172 pp.

"Arta Lucescu Boutcher has written a seminal work on the Romanian poet, philosopher, dramaturge, and cinematographer, Benjamin Fondane, who died in Auschwitz in 1944. Her fascinating book takes us through his Parisian years when he was associated with Dada and Surrealism. His friendship with the Russian philosopher Lev Shestov led him to a deeper esthetic and ethical understanding of the human condition and of his own as a Jew. Invaluable are Boutcher's English translations of some of Fondane's Romanian and French writings." (Bettina L. Knapp, Thomas Hunter Professor, Hunter College, and the Graduate School of the City University of New York)

Andrei Codrescu, *Wakefield*, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2004

"Just as literary Fausts have done for centuries, Wakefield makes a bargain with Satan, who, as it turns out, is having his own existential crisis, due to bureaucratic headaches and younger upstart demons in the afterworld. The Devil gives him a year to find an alternative life. So Wakefield, a motivational speaker and architecture enthusiast, crisscrosses the country, meeting New Age gurus, billionaire techno-geeks, global pioneers, gambling addicts and models who look like heroine addicts, venture capitalists, art collectors, rainforest protectors, S & M strippers... all while anxiously trying to discover his authentic life. Part metaphysical mystery, part travel adventure, part architectural romp, Wakefield explores the late American century and, as his own inner architecture shifts, attempts to restore his world through a shocking act that baffles even his jaded Satanic Majesty. Andrei Codrescu gives us a novel of big ideas, hilariously absurd and brilliantly observed." (From the presentation on the publisher's webpage www.algonquin.com)

Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: A political history of Romanian communism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, 395 pages, 21 b/w photographs.

Tismaneanu offers the first comprehensive history of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). It traces the origins of the once-tiny, clandestine revolutionary organization in the 1920s through the years of national power from 1944 to 1989 to the post-1989 metamorphoses of its members. Vladimir Tismaneanu uses documents that he discovered while working in the RCP archives in Bucharest in the mid-1990s and interviews with many of the party members from the Ceausescu and Gheorghiu-Dej eras to tell the absorbing story of how RCP members came to power as exponents of Moscow and succeeded in turning themselves into champions of autonomy. Tismaneanu analyzes both the main events in Romanian communism and the role of significant personalities in the party's history.

Romanian Studies Association of America

N e w s l e t t e r

c/o Nicolae Harsanyi

108 Pinegate Cir. #9

Chapel Hill, NC 27514