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Beyond Auschwitz: Polish History through Literature and Film

Ashley R. Maynor

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FORM C
COLLEGE SCHOLARS PROJECT APPROVAL

Ashley R. Maynor
Scholar

Dr. Karen D. Levy
Mentor

Beyond Auschwitz: Polish History Through Literature
and Film Project Title

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(Minimum 3 Required)

Name

Signature

Dr. Les Essif

[Signature]

Dr. Stephen Blackwell

[Signature]

Dr. Karen Levy

[Signature]

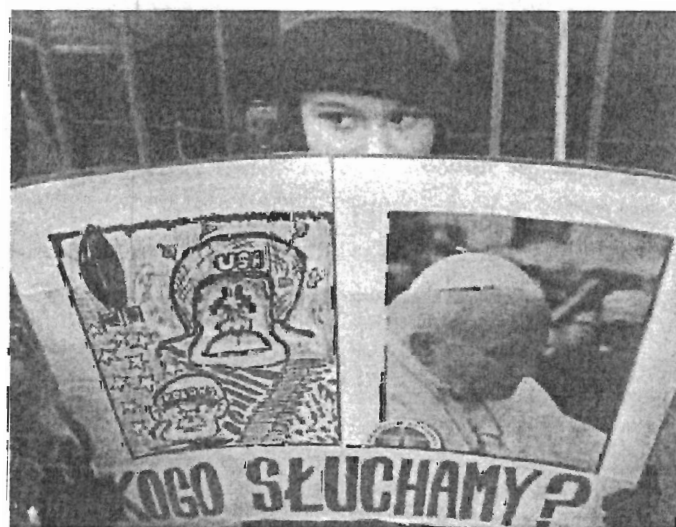
PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE SENIOR PROJECT TO THIS SHEET AND
RETURN BOTH TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR. THIS PAGE SHOULD BE
DATED AND COMPLETED ON THE DATE THAT YOUR DEFENSE IS HELD.

DATE COMPLETED 3 May 2004



Beyond Auschwitz: Post-World War II French and Polish History Through Literature and Film

The Senior Honors and College Scholars Thesis Project
of Ashley Maynor



"Who are we listening to?" reads a young girl's poster in Warsaw.



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College Scholars Thesis Project Description

My thesis project was designed to directly impact the University of Tennessee by increasing students' exposure to the cultures of France and Poland. Through my involvement in campus organizations such as the Pi Delta Phi National French Honors Society, I increased student and community involvement and interest in French and Polish Culture.

In order to complete research and course work for my project, I spent three semesters abroad in Poland and France, respectively. During my senior year, I completed nine hours of independent reading and research supervised by my faculty mentor.

In the 2003-2004 school year, I assumed presidency of the National French Honor Society and revitalized the club's activities by hosting a French Culture Night at the International House, a French Poetry Reading Competition, a Haitian/Francophone Culture Night, and an Initiation Banquet for new members.

As my Senior Honors Project, I designed and taught an upper-divisional Honors seminar entitled, "Beyond Auschwitz: Polish History Through Literature and Film," under the careful guidance of my faculty mentor, Dr. Karen D. Levy. This course was designed to provide the students with insight into aspects of Polish culture, cinema, and politics through the readings of short stories and poetry and the screening of films.

To supplement this course offering, I coordinated the International Literary Colloquy's spring semester program with a focus on contemporary Polish literature. A group of approximately thirty faculty, staff, and students met three times over the course of the semester to discuss different novels by a contemporary Polish author. I also organized a weeklong Polish Film Festival at Hodges Library to showcase Polish cinema. Each evening included a film screening preceded by an introduction to the film by a University of Tennessee professor.

Aftermath hardly effects studying abroad

ESTHER BAUMGARDNER
Academics Editor

Sept. 11, the day that will forever be remembered, literally rocked our world and shook our foundation so badly that many questioned the risk of traveling to foreign countries.

Although airplane tickets sales dropped, the number of students studying abroad did not.

"The number of UT students that applied actually seemed to go up," David Lawson, associate director of the center of international education, said. "Part of that wasn't an effect of 9-11, but more so because UT was pushing for students to study abroad."

Lawson also mentioned that some things slowed down, especially in the visa department for students coming to UT, but the vast majority have not had problems.

Considering that students feel less of a threat by these numbers than what the media suggests, how did students feel when they were on foreign land? Rebecca Umstot, senior in advertising, took the opportunity to study abroad in Sweden.

long explanations."

Even with those sometimes unavoidable explanations, Umstot said that she felt secure in Sweden.

"I felt extremely safe in Sweden — they are such a neutral nation. I was more concerned for the people on American soil than myself."

Ashley Maynor, a senior in French literature, was abroad for more than a year studying in Europe.

"I finished three semesters and one summer abroad, a semester in Poland, a summer in Austria and then a year in France, all at once without coming back to the U.S.," Maynor said.

Maynor was still in Knoxville when the Sept. 11 attacks occurred, but left in December of the same year.

"There was no turning back, I had already committed to the program and there was no way I could back out," Maynor said.

"I would say that I was not scared at all — especially in Sweden. A lot of internationals were sympathetic or understood it was a sensitive subject. Now, when we went to war; that's a whole different story," Umstot said. "I had to tell people I was Canadian so I could avoid conflict and hour-

"I wasn't very afraid, I knew this was something that I wanted to do and I knew that it would probably be safer to not be in the U.S. considering that the attacks were coming towards the United States and not necessarily to countries in Europe.

"I made a very strong rupture with the U.S. which makes my study abroad experience very different from someone who studies abroad and then comes immediately home," Maynor said, adding, "I'll always be an American and have an American viewpoint, but I was highly influenced by the European way of life that surrounded me while I was abroad."

Umstot said that she felt the aggression that Europeans had towards the States as a whole, but not necessarily towards her personally.

"The only thing I had to deal with that was unpleasant

was being an American when we attacked Iraq. I saw our flag being burned and protest after protest. It hurt me to see such hatred for my country, and mostly left me confused and frustrated with what was going on. I was not so proud to be an American for the first time, because of the reputation that America received. They saw America as selfish and aggressively controlling. It wasn't so easy at that time, but wore off," Umstot said.

Lawson encouraged, as did the State Department, to not represent yourself as an American in an expressive way.

"I encourage Americans to

be more aware of surroundings. Not wearing certain articles of clothing can make a difference between a terrorist target or not. None of our students encountered problems overseas in regard to 9-11," Lawson said.

All in all, both students had a positive experience studying abroad, as most students who travel to a new area do. And even with the renewed threat of terror, 9-11 will be viewed as a horrid day by the majority of the world.

"9-11 is viewed by most internationals as being a horrible thing and hate that it happened along with Americans," Umstot said.

Thursday, September 11, 2003

10 The Daily Beacon

Where in the world?

UT students have walked the Great Wall of China, surfed the waters of Australia, floated on the canals in Venice and visited more than 33 countries.

Argentina • Austria • Australia • Brazil • Costa Rica • Cuba
Denmark • England • Finland • France • Germany
Ghana • Greece • India • Ireland • Italy • Japan • Kenya
Malta • Mexico • Netherlands • China • Peru • Poland
Republic of Korea • Russia • South Africa • Spain • Sweden
Switzerland • Thailand • Uruguay • Wales • and more

✱

“Over the course of my travels and study abroad, I managed to see everything from the haunting bunkers of Auschwitz to the windy heights of the Eiffel Tower, to taste cultural dishes ranging from carp in gelatin to crème brûlée, to successfully ask for directions to the bathroom in Polish, and to figure out the public transportation system of Paris.”

— Ashley Maynor, senior in college scholars, studied in Poland and France.





Quick Facts

- Pi Delta Phi was founded as a departmental honor society at the University of Berkeley in 1906
- Declared the National French Honor Society in 1925, the second chapter was founded at the University of Southern California
- The Alpha Gamma chapter at UT was founded in 1949, and was the 27th chapter founded, and continues to be one of the oldest operating chapters
- More than 275 chapters are currently in existence at universities around the country, as well as in Paris and Aix-en-Provence
- The purpose of the society is
 - 1) To recognize outstanding scholarship in French studies
 - 2) To increase knowledge and appreciation of the spoken French language
 - 3) And to encourage French and francophone cultural activities
- Anyone studying French at least the 300 level with a 3.0 GPA in all French classes is eligible to be a regular member of Pi Delta Phi
- Induction is held each spring
- If you are not an inducted member and are below the 300 level, you can still participate in all Pi Delta Phi activities

Constitution for Pi Delta Phi

Article I

Name of Organization

The name of the organization will be Pi Delta Phi: National French Honor Society at the University of Tennessee.

Article II

Purpose

The purpose of this Society shall be (1) to recognize the outstanding scholarship in the French language and its literature; (2) to increase the knowledge and appreciation of Americans for the cultural contributions of the French-speaking world; (3) to stimulate and encourage French cultural activities.

Article III

Membership

Membership in Pi Delta Phi is open to all, regardless of race, gender, disability, religion, or national origin, provided that each candidate meets the academic requirements of the Society.

There are three categories of membership: regular, honorary and associate.

Regular Membership: This category includes graduate and undergraduate students who shall be nominated in recognition of their academic achievement in at least one semester of 300-level or higher French classes, with a minimum GPA of 3.00 in French and 2.8 overall GPA.

Honorary Membership: This category includes the French faculty of the sponsoring institution; members of the faculty-at-large, diplomats and community leaders who have shown a strong support of French culture.

Associate Membership: This category includes those students who enthusiastically support French activities but do not qualify for regular membership.

Article IV

Officers

Officers of Pi Delta Phi at the University of Tennessee must be regular or associate members in good academic standing. A student will be judged ineligible for office if said student is on disciplinary probation for violating any Student Standards of Conduct.

Article V
Term of Office

Officers shall serve for a term of one calendar year, and elections for the following year shall be held at the end of the spring semester. Elections may be also held at the beginning of the following fall for any vacant positions. A majority vote of members attending the election meeting is required for election.

Article VI
Meetings

Organizational meetings will be held on at least one occasion per month, with the exception of holidays, school breaks, etc. Events for the membership body will be held at the discretion of the officers.

Article VII
Financial Statement

Regular members are required to pay a one-time fee of \$25 for a lifetime membership to Pi Delta Phi. In the event of the dissolution of the club any remaining funds should be donated to the French division of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages.

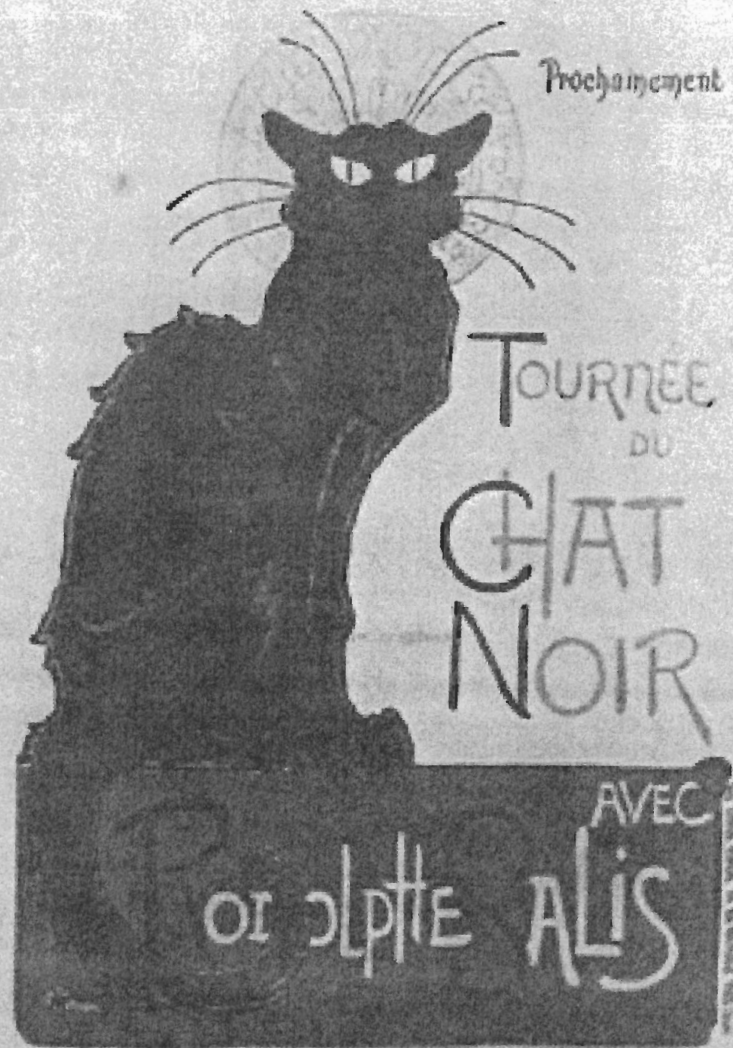
Article VIII
Advisor

An advisor will serve for two calendar years, this term subject to annual review. Under extreme dereliction of duty an advisor can be replaced at any time by the officers of the club. If members feel the advisor is not doing his or her duty they should first give the advisor a warning and second, if there are no improvements, discuss replacement. New advisors should be chosen by club members through nominations. The chosen professor should be asked to take the position, and if they decline another nominee will be chosen.

Duties of the Advisor are:

- (1) to represent the chapter at its own institution and at national conventions;
- (2) to advise and to support all activities of the chapter;
- (3) to be responsible for the annual election of student officers;
- (4) to submit an annual report to the Executive Director of the National Board of Pi Delta Phi;
- (5) to keep accurate and up-to-date records and make sure that such records and all information of the Society are given to the succeeding moderator.

The advisor must be a full-time faculty or staff member of the University of Tennessee. It is the advisor's responsibility to verify through the Office of Student Judicial Affairs that the officers are not on disciplinary probation.



Concours de Poésie

French Poetry Reading Competition

When: November 5th, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Where: I-House Great Room

Contact amaynor@utk.edu or your French instructor for details.

Sponsored by the Pi Delta Phi French Honors Society

Pi Delta Phi remercie pour leur générosité:

Barnes and Noble

Dr. Paul Barrette

Borders

The Book Eddy

The Golden Roast

Ms. Linda Jackson

Dr. Karen Levy

Dr. Mary McAlpin

McKay's Bookstore

Olivia H

Dr. John Romeiser

The Sunspot

UT Bookstore

UT International House



Pi Delta Phi,
la société
d'honneur française,
vous présente un

Concours de Poésie

le 5 novembre 2003

de 18h00 à 20h00

Interprètes:

Introduction par

Ashley Maynor, Présidente de Pi Delta Phi



Niveau I:

Cassella, Jason.....« A l'aveuglette rendez-vous »*
Chang, Sara.....Blémont, « Le Soir »
Hoover, Michael.....Villon, «Ballade des dames du temps jadis»
Horn, James.....Verlaine, « Romances sans paroles »
Oro, Rita.....Prévert, « Pour toi mon amour »
Orth, Amy.....« Sans titre »*
Shelton, Adam.....Adenis, « Chère nuit»
Wyche, Alex.....Hugo, « Demain dès l'aube »
Yusko, Sean.....« Ma fenêtre »*
Zalowitz, Zach.....Hugo, « Demain dès l'aube »

Niveau II :

Allard, Kristin.....Cocteau, « Plain-chant »
Clegg, Edward.....Baudelaire, « Enivrez-vous »
Dickens, Andrew.....Apollinaire, « 4 h »
Newcombe, Natalie.....Prévert, « On frappe »
Ross, Shawna.....Verlaine, « L'Amour par terre »
Speer, Brett.....Verlaine, « Chanson d'automne »
Stuffle, Shea.....Jean-Pierre Tus, « Dans ce train...»
Synder, Katie.....Verlaine, « Green »

Niveau III :

Buckley, Emily.....Mallarmé, « Apparition »
Davenport, Katie.....La Fontaine, « La Grenouille qui se veut faire
aussi grosse que le Bœuf »
Sikora, Justin.....Baudelaire, « L'Albatros »
Sokalski, Bob.....Eluard, « La Terre est bleue »
Yansané, Abdullah.....Corneille, extrait du *Cid*

Niveau IV :

Cloar, Imogene Jones.....Baudelaire, « Invitation au voyage »
Macdonald, Holly.....La Fontaine, « Le Corbeau et le Renard »
Patrick, Robert.....« L'arbre emporté par le déluge »*

Membres du jury :

Mlle. Shirine Benhenda
M. Julien Blin
M. Jean-Pierre Granju
Mlle. Linda Jackson
Mlle. Marie Lerichomme
Mlle. Viviane Manigat



Cette soirée a été organisée par les membres de Pi Delta
Phi, la société d'honneur française de
l'université de Tennessee. Pour toute
information et renseignements, contactez
Ashley Maynor à amaynor@utk.edu

I-House offers cultural programs

LAURA LACY
Staff Writer

UT students can experience another culture when they take advantage of the programs offered at the International House.

"Students get a good opportunity to meet and greet and talk to people of other cultures," David Lawson, assistant director of the Center for International Education, said.

Two cultural programs are planned for this month. Tonight at 6 in the International House, the French Honor Society will host a French poetry contest. On Nov. 12, students will have the opportunity to attend Italian Culture Night.

"When you graduate, it's very likely that students will work for, supervise, buy from, sell to or otherwise have to interact with people from another culture," Lawson said. "This is one way for people to prepare themselves for the world and

have a good time doing it."

The goal of these events is to broaden students' horizons and to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills, according to Lawson. By emphasizing different aspects of each culture, the coordinators of the event find a variety of ways to do this.

The focus of the French Night will be poetry. Students competing in the French poetry contest have the choice of reciting poems they have written or those written by well-known French poets.

"Literature reveals so much about society," Ashley Maynor, president of the French Honor Society, said. "I thought it (the contest) was appropriate to help students learn not only the language but also the cultural context of the words of the language."

Contestants will face a panel of judges composed of native French speakers and French instructors. The judges will choose a winner based on the

participant's pronunciation, intonation and poetic interpretation.

Prizes including chocolates, books and gift certificates will be awarded to the winners.

"It's (the contest) a way of promoting French culture on campus," Maynor said. "It also gets first- and second-year students excited about learning a foreign language."

The Italian Culture Night will focus on the culinary delights of Italy. Guests of the International House on Italian Night will eat a full meal with various pastas and sauces, according to Lawson. He added that Italian Nights of the past have featured other cultural demonstrations, such as opera.

Up to 150 students have attended these Culture Nights in the past.

"Part of our mission is to help all students to broaden their horizon and to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills," Lawson said.



October 2, 2003

Dear French Instructor,

Help us get your students excited about learning French!

On behalf of the Pi Delta Phi National French Honors Society, I invite you and your students to a **"French Culture Night"** to be held on **Wednesday, October 8th, from 6 to 8 PM in the Great Room of the International House** on campus. This evening will be a great opportunity for your students to sample French food, learn about French culture, meet French exchange students, and get enthusiastic about learning French!

The event is open to all students, regardless of their level of French. The cost of participation is only \$1 at the door. Reservations are highly recommended and can be made by e-mailing amaynor@utk.edu. Students will be admitted at the door without a reservation until the food runs out. **Please announce this event to all your classes.**

Furthermore, a "Concours de Poésie" French poetry reading competition is being organized for the evening of November 5th. You will soon receive more information regarding this event and ways in which you can be of assistance. I ask that you consider offering extra-credit to your students for their participation in this event and hope that you will see it as an opportunity to incorporate French poetry into your class curriculum. In the past, teachers have held their own class competitions (students memorize and recite short poems before the class) and sent the winners to the campus-wide competition. The competition will include categories for all levels of French ability.

Please feel free to post and/or copy the accompanying flyer about the French Culture Night. To better inform you and your students about the existence of the French Honors Society, you are also receiving a quick fact sheet about what exactly Pi Delta Phi is and what we as an organization do. A Pi Delta Phi member may contact you in the next few days about making a brief (3-minute) presentation about the Honors society and our first event to your class.

Thank you for your support.

Cordially,

Ashley R. Maynor
President, Pi Delta Phi French Honors Society

Special Thanks

To:

Viviane Manigat

Dr. Karen Levy

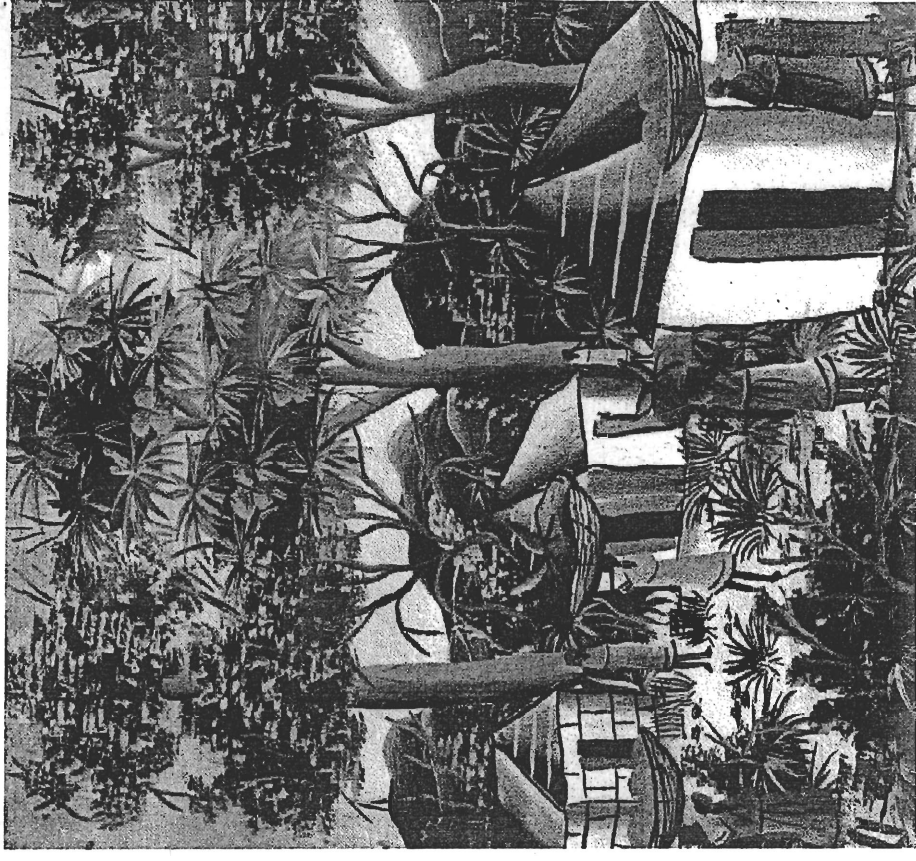
Dr. Mary McAlpin

UT I-House Staff



The Friends and Members of the Haitian

Community of Knoxville



Pi Delta Phi French Honor Society

presents

Haiti: Pearl of the Antilles

February 18, 2004
6:00 to 8:00 pm

Haiti: Pearl

Introduction by

Ashley Maynor, French Honor Society President



Greeting

Join us as we sing a Creole song and perform a liturgical dance.

Dinner

Caribbean salad/Salade caraibienne

Squash soup/Soupe de Jironon

Rice and beans/Riz national

Rice with bean sauce/Riz pois en sauce

*Rice with mushrooms/Riz diondion**

*Grillat (pork)/Grillat**

Tropical Fruit/Fruits tropicaux

Double fried plantains/Bananes pesées

** not suitable for vegetarians*

“Haiti: A Painted History”

After the screening of this short documentary, Viviane Marigat will lead us in a discussion about the film

of the Antilles

Lyrics of “Fèy o”

Fèy o, sovè la vi mwen,
nan mizè mwen yé o.

Fèy o, sovè la vi mwen,
nan mizè mwen yé o.

Pitit mwen malad,
mwen minninl kay hougan,
similo.

Pitit mwen malad,
mwen minninl kay hougan,
si ou bon gangan,
wa sovè la vi mwen,
nan mizè mwen yé o.



Brought to you by the
Pi Delta Phi French Honor Society

Bring your drums and your
appetite!

Wednesday, February 18th, 6-8pm
in the I-House Great Room



HAITIAN CULTURE NIGHT

Free!

Get a taste of Haitian music,
dance, and Caribbean cuisine!
Join us for a discussion following
the short, powerful documentary:
"Haiti: A Painted History."

Presented by the Pi Delta Phi French Honor Society

NEWS
SENTINEL

Worry is backdrop to Haitian program

BY BRYAN MITCHELL
mitchellb@knews.com

Sebastien Clerge arrived in Knoxville nearly five years ago from Haiti in search of an education and refuge from a homeland rife with domestic troubles.

On Wednesday evening he expressed concern for the small Caribbean country on the brink of civil war.

"It's a terrible situation for a country so close to the United States to be suffering so much," Clerge said.

Clerge was one of about 50 people at the University of Tennessee International House who attended the program "Haiti: Pearl of the Antilles."

The program was put on by the National French Honor Society and is part of a series of programs hosted by the International House that highlights the culture of other countries.

Participants were treated to music and dancing from Haiti, a movie on the country's painters and Haitian food.

Native Haitian Viviane Manigat was one of the performers at the two-hour program.

She, too, worries about the situation in her homeland, where leaders have appealed for international help as police have all but surrendered to rebels following a two-week-old uprising.

"We are anxious about the situation in Haiti," she said. "This is a time for change in Haiti, but there are those that don't want change in Haiti."

Slightly smaller than Maryland, the country is directly

southeast of Cuba and consists of the western one-third of the island of Hispaniola.

Recognized as the world's first black republic, Haiti has long been plagued by civil insurrections. The largely Roman Catholic country of 7 million people was rich with natural resources before the Spanish and French invasions.

It now is considered one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and is home to one of the world's worst AIDS epidemics.

The United States has intervened several times in Haitian affairs over the last 100 years, most recently in 1994's Operation Uphold Democracy.

Clerge, however, said he does not want to see U.S. soldiers in Haiti, which is marking its 200th year of independence.

Instead, the UT student said he would like to see an international force restore order. U.S. and French leaders have called for a diplomatic solution and have shied away from deploying troops.

Manigat said there is a movement within Haiti advocating peaceful change but that it is overshadowed by others intent on using violence to oust President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On Wednesday, as violence swept across her native land, Manigat prayed for an end to the bloodshed.

"Yes we want change," she said. "We hope it's for democracy and sustainable growth."

Bryan Mitchell may be reached at 865-342-6306.

Honors Seminar UH-348 Section 85539
Mondays 3:35-4:25
Spring 2004

Instructors:
Karen D. Levy
Ashley R. Maynor

“Beyond Auschwitz: Polish History Through Literature and Film”

Course Readings In This Packet:

Schulz, Bruno	“Tailor’s Dummies” and “Cinnamon Shops”
Borowski, Tadeusz	“This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentleman”
Gombrowicz, Witold	“Dinner at Countess Kotłubay’s”
Mrożek, Sławomir	“The Elephant”
Natasza Goerke	“The Third Shore”



Honors Seminar, UH-348
Spring 2004

Instructors:

Ashley R. Maynor

e-mail: ashleymaynor@yahoo.com

"Office" Hours 8:00am-1:00pm M, W at the I-House (across from Melrose)

Home phone: 546-0932

Karen D. Levy

e-mail: klevy@utk.edu

Office located in McClung Tower 606

Office phone: 974-6998

Home phone: 691-4296

"Beyond Auschwitz: Polish History Through Literature and Film"

"The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it."

-Elizabeth Drew

This seminar will consist of a brief overview of Polish history, literature, and film with a special emphasis on the post-World War II period. We will read and discuss a number of short stories and poems while examining the forces of history and Polish culture that inspired their creation. We will address a number of issues and questions about the Polish experience, such as: Is art/poetry/literature possible after the atrocities of Auschwitz? How is the search for self ever-present in contemporary Polish literature? How is the political situation of Poland represented in literature? What does it mean to be a citizen of a country whose very existence is threatened from century to century?

Students will also have the opportunity to screen and respond to Polish cinema from a more informed perspective. The class will work together as a group to expose the UT community to Polish culture through the organization of a Polish Culture Night at the International House where students will prepare traditional Polish dishes and make short presentations on Polish culture.

Certain Student Responsibilities:

- purchase packet of all readings from Campus Copy
- read all class materials
- actively and thoughtfully participate in class discussions and class related activities
- notify one of the instructors before any absence
- have no more than two absences during the semester

Work To Be Done For the Course:

Class participation/attendance: 20%

Participation in Polish Culture Night at I-House: 20%

Quizzes/Short Journals/Writing Responses: 20%

Film Reviews/Responses: 20%

Final Exam (oral): 20%

- One quiz is scheduled and pop quizzes over readings are a possibility.
- Three writing responses to course readings are to be written over the course of the semester. Students may choose which works to respond to in these journals.
- At least one Polish film is to be seen and evaluated outside of class. Students may choose to see films at the Polish Film Festival (*preferred*) or on their own in the Media Center.

Extra credit: Polish Film Festival attendance. During one week in April, you will have the opportunity to screen Polish films and write a one page typed response in addition to the one required film response.

Please note: extra credit will not be sufficient enough to replace any one component of the final grade.

Class Schedule

January 12, 2004: "I Say Pole, You Say Pollack": Dispelling Stereotypes And Myths About Poland

In-class: Introductions, reading of poem "Vocabulary" by Szymborska, overview of course and student expectations.

Homework: Purchase packet of readings from Campus Copy. Learn one new "fact" about Poland.

January 19, 2004: MLK Holiday/No class

Homework: Review map and information handouts in packet on Polish history. Prepare for a short, objective quiz.

January 26, 2004: Poland, That is to Say "Nulle Part": History Overview Part I

In-class: power-point presentation on history and art of Poland.

Homework: Research and type one page about an aspect of Polish history or culture that interests you (not Holocaust related!)

February 2, 2004: History Overview Part II: Literature and Moving Beyond Auschwitz: Is art, poetry, and literature still possible?

February 9, 2004 "Tailor's Dummies" and "Cinnamon Shops": A Jewish Perspective of Pre-War Poland

February 16, 2004 "This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentleman": A Pole's View of the Concentration Camps

February 23, 2004 "Dinner at Countess Kotlubay's": French Influences on Polish Literature

March 1, 2004 “The Elephant”: Surrealism in Poland

March 8, 2004 Spring Break/No class

March 15, 2004 “The Third Shore”: Contemporary Authors in Translation

March 22, 2004 Planning the Polish Culture Night

Wednesday, March 24, 2004 Tentative date for Polish Culture Night at the I-House

March 29, 2004 Class visit with Mira Ryczke Kimmelman, “Gdansk Past and Present”

April 5, 2004 Selections from *Spoiling Cannibals’ Fun: Poetry of the Last Two Decades of Communist Rule*

April 12, 2004 Nobel Prize winning poets Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska

April 12-15, 2004 Polish Film Festival: Students are to attend at least one evening and to type a one-page response.

April 19, 2004 A Taste of Polish Film: the *Decalogue*

April 26, 2004 Last Class: Discussion of Film and “EU Bound: The Future of Poland”

Readings and Materials:

Short Stories

Borowski, Tadeusz “This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentleman”

Gombrowicz, Witold “Dinner at Countess Kotłubay’s”

Schulz, Bruno “Tailor’s Dummies” and “Cinnamon Shops”

Mrozek, Sławomir “The Elephant”

Natasza Goerke “The Third Shore”

Poetry

Selections from *Polish Poetry of the Last Two Decades of Communist Rule: Spoiling Cannibals’ Fun*

Selections from *Post-War Polish Poetry*

Miłosz, Czesław *Treatise on Poetry*

New and Collected Poems (1931-2001)

Szymborska, Wisława *View with a Grain of Sand*

Films

Kieslowski, Krzysztof *Decalogue*

Other Components/Special Events:

International Literary Colloquy Semester on Polish Literature, contact gehlhar@utk.edu if interested in participating.

Sample Discussion Questions

Bruno Schulz: "Tailor's Dummies" and "The Cinnamon Shops"

Reading Quiz

Tailor's Dummies

Explain briefly Adela's presence in the Schulz home and her relation to Father as can be interpreted from "Tailor's Dummies."

Which character says, "Less matter, more form"?

To whom is this character speaking? Who is the audience?

What gesture does Adela use to assert her power in the household?

Cinnamon Shops

Why does the narrator leave the theater?

What is the origin of the term "cinnamon shops"?

What type of transportation does the boy use to get home?

Questions for Discussion

What does Adela represent and/or symbolize in the Schulz household? What is her role?

Explain Father's "treatise" in your own words. Is there any truth to his babblings? If so, what?

What is Father rebelling against/afraid of?

Who or what is the "Demiurge"?

How does Adela wield her power?

In your opinion, is Father a weak character? Insane? Paranoid? Defend your position.

What elements of Judaism/Hasidism become apparent in Schulz's work? Can you see any influences of Jewish (Hassidic) Folklore?

What, if any, foreshadowing of the fate of Polish Jews exists in these stories?

How does the characterization of Father differ in the two stories we read?

What sense of the town do we get from "Cinnamon Shops"? What is the town like?

Tadeusz Borowski: "This Way For The Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen"

Questions for Discussion

What is Canada? Who is a part of this group?

Is it really a "privilege" to be in Canada? Why or why not?

Is the inclusion of German words a necessary part of the story? Argue your position.

Henri says, "If they didn't believe in God and eternal life, they'd have smashed the crematoria long ago." (53) Do you agree with his stance? Is one position or the other supported by historical analysis of the Holocaust?

Compare the description of the SS officer on page 56 with that of the Jews on page 57. What, if anything, does this reveal about the narrator, his point of view, or his feelings?

The narrator thinks to himself, "It is the camp law: people going to their death must be deceived to the very end. This is the only permissible form of charity." (58) Do you agree? Why or why not? (Compare with the barber's personal account in *Shoah*.)

Are Henri and the narrator "good people" as the narrator asks on page 61? Support your position with a precise example.

What images in the story haunt you? Which scenes are you unable to forget? Why?

What is the meaning of the song the Germans sing on the last page?

Think about the end of the story. What feelings does the ending evoke?

Witold Gombrowicz: "Dinner at Countess Kotłubay's"

Questions for Discussion

What exactly happens at the dinner at Countess Kotłubay's?

What is revealed about the class conflict/hierarchy in Polish social circles through the narrator's relation to others?

What other aspects of Polish culture surface in the story? (i.e. Catholicism, Polish heroes, the White Eagle, etc.)

Note the references and allusions to French culture, not to mention the French words employed in the story. How does this reflect the Polish nobility's relation with France? Compare with historical examples.

How do the aristocrats speak to one another at dinner? What is the significance of their "poetry" and "intellectual" discourse? [Compare to Schulz's *Treatise*.]

What happens to Cauliflower?

How can this story be interpreted? Political satire? Criticism of the bourgeoisie? Anti-French? Anti-intellectual?

Notes to Supplement Reading

P. 29 "thinking reed"
from Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*

347. Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But, if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him; the universe knows nothing of this.

All our dignity consists, then, in thought. By it we must elevate ourselves, and not by space and time which we cannot fill. Let us endeavour, then, to think well; this is the principle of morality.

348. A thinking reed.--It is not from space that I must seek my dignity, but from the government of my thought. I shall have no more if I possess worlds. By space the universe encompasses and swallows me up like an atom; by thought I comprehend the world.

Sample Student Work

In *Cinnamon Shops*, Bruno Schulz narrates the pseudo-realistic journey of young boy through the streets of his hometown. The term “pseudo-realistic” is an apt term, as it is not quite clear where the reality of the journey ends and the fantasy begins. However, one thing is certain: a quest that originates as a simple walk home to retrieve a forgotten wallet soon becomes a dreamy stroll through the town and ultimately to its most exotic location: the so-called cinnamon shops.

In many of his short stories, Schulz does not simply tell a story— he illustrates it with vivid language and elaborate descriptions. *Cinnamon Shops* is no different. In fact, his carefully chosen descriptions of the town at night made up of both the realistic and fantastic give the setting an almost ethereal feel, much like Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*. Combined with the boy’s almost aimless wandering, Schulz’s imagery further contributes to an environment that is quite dream-like.

Another important aspect in Schulz’s *Cinnamon Shops* is the arbitrary use of symbols to represent various moods, feelings, and characters of the story. From this story alone, one cannot truly understand some of the far-reaching connections implied by Schulz’s symbolism.

One such connection suggested in class was that the horse depicted in *Cinnamon Shops* may very well represent the Father, who had an appearance that Schulz describes as “an old ill-tempered fox” (59). When the boy first meets with the horse, it seems confident and intelligent— even more so than its driver. Riding in the cab himself, the boy “blissfully” enjoys the brisk air— that is, until the horse can no longer continue in the snow drifts. At this point, the boy gets out and notices a wound in the horse’s belly.

Though this imagery is quite open to interpretation, I feel that this situation symbolizes the relationship between the father and the boy. When the boy is young and “riding behind father” so to speak, he is blissful in his existence (or perhaps in his ignorance?). However, the father can only take the boy so far and when the road becomes steep (perhaps a metaphor for old age or even more likely, a general disillusionment towards the father’s ideas), the horse can go no farther. I am still undecided as to what the wound symbolizes— however, I feel it may have some connections with the fact that the Father was the victim of a great deal of ridicule in the household. At any rate, the wound is self-inflicted (“I did it for you” [67]) just as the father brings the ridicule on himself through the expression of his often wild ideas.

How to Spoil the Cannibals' Fun

FOR A LONG time I've been
wondering how to spoil
cannibals' fun

wait until they
bake themselves
beneath the golden lid of the sun
but the cooking would just
toughen them up

not let them
eat you
that program holds no food for thought
and is not entirely realistic
when
they've got you on
the tip of their tongues

eat them
how tasteless

then perhaps
turn them off people
how rude

so they sit
in their comfortable jungles
bursting with
humanity

Rachel Graves

Response to poem "How To Spoil Cannibal's Fun"

A tantalizing question titillates wonderment, the terrible trembling nude. How to spoil the cannibals' fun? Should we partake in this feast? Fondle the fermenting flesh of forbidden festivities? Or, is there some darker richer putrification? The fiends have turned tame when their atrocities are termed "fun". And their victims, the perverts, spoil it for spite.

Well-

Will they consume themselves then?

No-

Their intraspecies quibbles are just Darwinian fortifications.

As saliva dissolves skin, escape is silly, and the clean break, a bore. Your name sticks to the tip of the cannibals' tongue and your death is enunciation.

Indulge as he may, the cannibal's intestinal lining absorbs no flavors. The obese cadaver is still starving. His hunger is insatiable as that of an emaciated child, the belly bloated by grass. Human flesh is insubstantial. Succulent life escapes it.

The ridiculous cannibal cannot claim savagery. That glory belongs to his victim. Dead as he is, this plight, so desperate, so denigrating, is undeniably human.

This poem is the celebration of a victim. The cannibal has inspired passion, life, and art: violence. These precious stones burn hot in the hand of one beautiful question: "How to spoil the cannibals' fun?"

Rachel Graves
Response to Kieslowski's film *Red*

The heroine's occupation is the riddle of "Red". In "Blue" a mother, a wife, a woman who exists solely in relation to one man, finds liberty. In "White", a hair dresser, a Pole who washes the heads of strangers, finds equality. And in "Red" a model finds fraternity, a model and a judge.

We find Liberty in art, we find Equality in power, and we find fraternity in disaster: The judge and the model are united by a traffic accident, and she finds love in a ship wreck at sea.

Liberty is blue, as the sky is blue. Both liberty and the sky are expansive, terrifying as they are eternal, like death. I cannot look into the sky without feeling awe and fear. Because it never ends I am alone. So in a sense liberty is loneliness. Equality is white. White is a blank slate. After the orgasm the relationship begins anew, as if the intensity of pleasure had erased the history of humiliation. Fraternity is red. It is the blood that flows through every human vein, the blood that is made visible in times of tragedy. So in a sense fraternity is sympathy and communion, those things which the duties of both occupations deny. Observation, which entails estrangement, is central to judgment. The judge must be emotionally distanced in order that he may see the case with cold objectivity. But human affairs are not cold, and to really know them, you must huddle close. The model is celestial, removed from humanity, elevated above our heads, on the stage, on the billboard, untouchable.

The Pink Elephant in the Room No European Talks About Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

In *Politics and the English Language* George Orwell pleads a case for the use of fresh metaphors in literature, a plea that has fallen on deaf ears. As literary movement gives way to literary movement, the same metaphors and pretentious symbols remain, transforming political statements ripe with potential into unfounded, trite pandering. While such Michael Mooreish diatribes encompass much of the “alternative” political thought in America, if Slawomir Mrozek’s deft wrangling of metaphor in *The Elephant* is any indication, then the politically minded literature of Poland takes on Orwell’s challenge while carving out its own original niche in the literary medium.

Though *The Elephant*’s length runs a mere four pages, Mrozek utilizes every inch of space plotting out an allegory for Poland’s cultural desires under the guise of a humorous anecdote. The titular elephant of the story serves as a symbol of Poland’s desire for independence conflicting with its need of acceptance by the majority of Western Europe. Rather than accept a live elephant as a gift, the zoo director of the story opts to build his own out of rubber, using the saved money to buy a jet or convert a monument. While Mrozek clearly satirizes the impulses of government authority with the zoo director’s actions, he also demonstrates the resourcefulness and desire for self-sufficiency inherent in Polish culture. The rubber elephant in the story may not be real, but it is a product of Polish know-how, a singular vision from start to finish. Mrozek further demonstrates the link between the elephant and Polish independence through the length of time it takes workers to inflate the rubber animal. As the workers pump air into the elephant they mutter such offhand comments as, “It’s getting harder all the time,” and “It’s an uphill job” about the task at hand. Despite its fairly lengthy history, Poland fought an uphill battle for independence that only truly ended with the last few years.

Mrozek furthers his use of the elephant as an extended metaphor by allowing it to fully inflate only after the workers use a gas pump. Through this action, the author alludes to the effect of modernization on Polish society, an attribute that in combination with many others helped establish the current Polish culture.

Mrozek ends the allegory of the story when a gust of wind carries the rubber elephant into the air as a teacher lectures his students about the animal. Through the action, Mrozek comments on the ability of Western Europe to brush Poland's advancements off as minuscule, the same way a strong current of wind carries rubber into the air. Though Poland may advance and gain worldly knowledge, in comparison to such Western cultural behemoths France, the country feels it plays the part of the neglected stepchild, bowing to the whims of its giant neighbors.

Throughout *The Elephant*, Mrozek alludes to the fragile situation Poland finds itself in the modern world. On one hand the country has evolved into an individual entity with its own culture and independence. On the other, it seems to much of the world as fast food Europe. However, if the country continues to follow its own path and not pine for acceptance, it may one day change the minds of its citizens who drink liquor, break windows and no longer believe in elephants.

My Boat is Bigger Than Your Boat: The Quest of the Alpha Male
in Roman Polanski's *Knife in the Water*.
Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

Pity Roman Polanski. One intercourse session with an ambiguous teenage girl and an entire body of masterful work takes a backseat to tabloid headlines. In the days before pedo-Polanski became Roman's primary claim to fame, his work reigned supreme as the pinnacle of Polish cinema, examining sexual mores and psychological interactions faster than American films could lift his ideas. Polanski's debut feature *Knife in the Water* demonstrates his ability to hold a firm grasp on cinematic style while conducting a fearless examination of the competition inherent in homosocial relationships between men of different generations.

From the first encounter between the middle-aged Andrzej and the Young Boy, Polanski tinkers with the undercurrent between a man losing his youthful zest and a boy beginning to come into his own both occupationally and sexually by framing both characters in the shot and alternating close-ups. Polanski's use of cinematography convention visually conveys the internal battle between the experienced and exuberant. Polanski further delves into the conflict between his primary characters through narrative scenes involving ludicrous competitions between the two men. Throughout the film, the two assert their ability over each other through such paltry contests as who can more accurately hit a cutting board mounted on a wall with a knife to, in the final scenes, who can pretend to drown the longest and evoke a greater response from Andrzej's girlfriend Krystyna. In addition Polanski asserts the competitive aspect of the two characters by exhibiting their sheer sexual prowess visible through their swimming attire. While Andrzej's body demonstrates the beginning strains of a slowed metabolism his features remain finely chiseled with age, a far cry from the Young Boy's taut yet barely tuned physical appearance. In Polanski's world, every aspect of life has the potential to serve as a means for males to exhibit

their domination, an auteuristic theme Polanski would revisit in many of his later works from, the hard-boiled detective versus millionaire businessman of *Chinatown* to John Cassavetes's pact with Satan to revive his acting career in *Rosemary's Baby*. Before Paul Thomas Anderson and Cameron Crowe brought their American versions of male-domination to the silver screen, Roman Polanski took a cinematic stance on the topic from Poland, quietly controversial yet speaking volumes that continue to resonate a generation later.

Keith Hollingshead-Cook
Honors 348
April 6, 2004

Reaction to "A Polish Dictionary"

Adam Zagajewski's poem, "A Polish Dictionary," provides an insightful look into the Polish mentality concerning suffering at the hands of foreigners. The poem opens with a list of random items, including everything from "sabers, horses" to "women, manners." Although seemingly insignificant, the individual items are all simple aspects of everyday life for Poles and together constitute Polish culture and life. It is, however, precisely these small things that define Poland, as the title of the poem suggests.

The loss of these apparently frivolous objects and aspects of existence rob the Poles of the flavor of life and leave them with "an ordinary life with its taste of water." It is at this point, when Poland has been stripped bare, that the courage and valor of the Poles are awakened. Zagajewski suggests that they have absolutely nothing else to live for, so Poles are willing to fight to the death. This idea of a fearsome strength appears in several images throughout the poem. First, Zagajewski mentions a hummingbird, a small ostensibly powerless creature, like Poland. This creature, however, is capable of huge bursts of frantic energy as it desperately beats its wings. This image is more clearly presented in the final line of the poem, "They'll become valiant as bronze and steel." Not only are bronze and steel indestructible, but they are also the materials used to create statues in memory of a culture's heroes. This suggests that the loss of all Poland's material possessions will breed a new generation of heroes for Poland as it struggles against its enemies. The mention of steel also seems to be an ironic comment on Russia's

goals in suppressing Poland in order to incorporate them into the Russian communist machine. Stalin, known as “the man of steel,” put great emphasis on the development of industry and especially steel works while he was in power. By stripping the Poles of everything in an attempt to integrate them, the Russians ironically only ignited a fervent resistance in the Poles that would not allow submission.

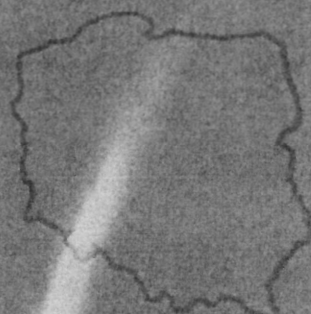
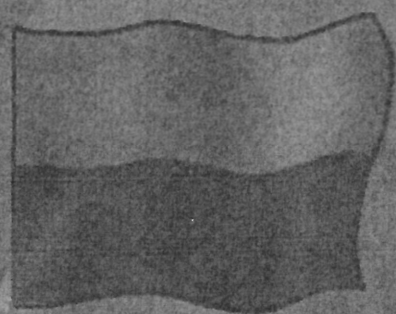
DISCOVER POLAND

Polish Culture Night

**An evening of Polish
culture, entertainment,
food, and fun!**

When: Wed. March 24 at 6pm

Where: The International House



For more info, call 974-4453

Polish Culture Night

March 24, 2004

Lekki Barszcz: Beet Soup

Traditional Polish Salads:

Apple and Carrot

Sliced Cucumber

Polish Kiełbasa: Polish Sausage

Pierogi Ruskie: Dumplings

onions, and mushrooms

Mazurek

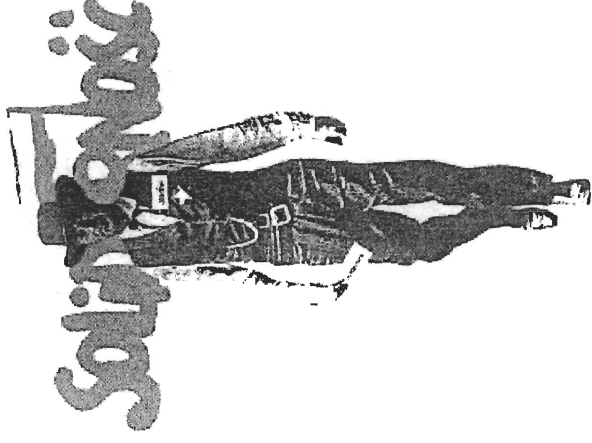
Mazurek

Cake

Sernik: Cheese



An Evening of Polish Culture



W SAMO POŁUDNIE
4 CZERWCA 1989

Poster from the 1989 Solidarity elections by Tomasz Sarniecki.
Depicts Gary Cooper from a film, holding a ballot and wearing the
Solidarity logo on his vest! Caption: It's High Noon June 4, 1989.

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contributions,*

*And to Hubert Janicki, for the inspiration that
began it all.*

Opening

Selections from Chopin

Performed by Matthew Carlton

Welcome and Introduction

From Ashley Maynor

A Traditional Polish Meal

Dishes Introduced by Rachel Graves

Dinner Entertainment

A Polish Folk Tale

Told by Beth Reith

Special Musical Guests

A Polish Fashion Show!

Closing

The Polish National Anthem

Performed by Brent Reed

Throughout the Event – Be Sure Not to Miss:

Demographics and Government Cindy Yarbrough

The Solidarity Movement Keith Hollingshead-Cook

Polish Film Jerod Hollyfield

Polish Sports Drew Holland

Pisanki: Painted Eggs Erin Byers

Traditional Polish Dress Scott Sherrill, Beth Reith
& Jessica Dainty

Culture Night Participants

Chefs — Matthew Carlton, Ashley Akin, Ben Siegrist

Servers — Keith Hollingshead-Cook, Beth Reith, Matt Singleton,
Drew Holland, Rachel Graves, Ben Siegrist

Publicity — Brent Reed, Jerod Hollyfield, Sarah Woodlard, Scott Sherrill

Event Filming — Jaye Davidson *Photography* — Jessica Dainty

DJ — Cindy Yarbrough *Menu* — Ashley Akin *Program* — Erin Byers

Poland showcased in discussion forums

LINDSEY FOSTER
Staff Writer

Students, faculty and staff have the opportunity to join three different colloquies concerning various novels about Poland.

"The most exciting thing about the colloquies is the encounter that students, faculty and staff here at UT will experience with contemporary Polish literature and the country itself — particularly important because of Poland's effort to join

the (European Union)," Karen Levy, French professor, said.

Discussions will be over the books as works of art and literature in their historical context as representation of Polish culture, society and mentality.

Poland has been betrayed and abused throughout history. Most studies about Poland focus on one or more negative aspects of that history, Levy said.

"The literary colloquies, however, will showcase Poland from another perspective —

through that of its rich literary heritage, which includes several Nobel prize poets and authors," Ashley Maynor, senior double majoring in college scholars and French literature, said.

The first book is "The Street of Crocodiles" by Bruno Schulz. It is a collection of short stories written by a Polish Jew between the world wars.

The second novel is "The Polish Complex" by Tadeusz Konwicki, which tells about the post WWI period of Polish history under communism.

Discussion No. 3 will be over the "House of Day, House of Night" by Olga Tokarczuk. This novel was published in English translation last year by a contemporary female novelist. It is a book set in modern day Poland with people who all have their own stories to tell.

"As Poland is to formally join the 'Western' world, what better time than now to take a glimpse of the hidden jewels of Polish literature," Maynor, said.

See Polish on page 7

Polish novel colloquies

Feb. 5 — "The Street of Crocodiles" by Bruno Schulz

March 2 — "The Polish Complex" by Tadeusz Konwicki

April 13 — "House of Day, House of Night" by Olga Tokarczuk

The discussions will be held in the International House Great Room from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Polish

continued from page 6

To attend the discussions e-mail Jim Gehlhar, Director for the Center of International Education, at gehlhar@utk.edu as soon as possible to express interest in the colloquies.

To keep the discussion on task Gehlhar will only choose 30 people to attend the colloquy.

The people chosen will receive an e-mail of congratulation telling them

to pick up their free novel from Gehlhar.

"Live and interesting conversation is offered to the students, faculty and staff who attend the discussion," Gehlhar, said.

TUESDAY

Jan. 27, 2004

Vol. 95, issue 11

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The Daily Beacon

Polish Film Festival



Monday, April 12th

Krzysztof Kieslowski, *Red*, 1994, 95 mins.

A beautiful model named Valentine crosses paths with a retired judge, whose dog she runs over with her car. The lonely judge, she discovers, amuses himself by eavesdropping on all of his neighbors' phone conversations. Near Valentine's apartment lives a young man who aspires to be a judge and loves a woman who will betray him. From these characters' proximity comes spiritual kinship and mutual redemption.



Tuesday, April 13th

Andrzej Wajda, *Man of Marble*, 1976, 165 mins.

Agnieszka, is making her thesis film. She is looking behind the scenes at the life of a 1950's bricklayer, Birkut, who was briefly elevated to the status of a communist hero. She wants to know how his heroism was created and what became of him. She gets a hold of censored footage and interviews with the man's friends and ex-wife, and the filmmaker who made him a hero. A portrait of Birkut emerges as a man who believed in the socialist ideals, the workers revolution, and in building housing for all.



Wednesday, April 14th

Agnieszka Holland, *Europa, Europa*, 1992, 109 mins.

Based on the real-life exploits of Solomon Perel, a young German Jew who posed as a fervent young Stalinist, who becomes an accepted and respected member of the Nazi Youth, burying his true background in a desperate bid for survival.



Thursday, April 15th

Roman Polanski, *Knife in the Water*, 1962, 94 mins.

A story about psychological and sexual power games between a successful journalist named Andrzej, his wife Christine, and a student hitch-hiker they pick up en route to the lakeside.

All screenings begin at 7:00 pm in the **Hodges Library Auditorium**, located on Melrose Ave., on the University of Tennessee campus.

Each film will be preceded by a brief introduction by a UT film professor.

Free and open to the public!

Independent Reading and Research List

Novels

Borowski, Tadeusz	<i>This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentleman</i>
Camus, Albert	<i>La Peste</i> <i>La Chute</i>
Duras, Marguerite	<i>La Douleur</i> <i>Le Navire night</i> <i>Le Camion</i> <i>Hiroshima, Mon Amour</i> <i>L'Amant</i>
Goerke, Natasza	<i>Farewells to Plasma</i>
Gombrowicz, Witold	<i>Ferdydurke</i>
Konwicki, Tadeusz	<i>The Polish Complex</i> <i>A Minor Apocalypse</i> <i>Moonrise, Moonset</i>
Milosz, Czeslaw	<i>The Captive Mind</i> <i>The Issa Valley</i>
Schulz, Bruno	<i>Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass</i> <i>The Street of Crocodiles</i>
Szpilman, Wladyslaw	<i>The Pianist</i>
Tokarczuk, Olga	<i>House of Day, House of Night</i>
Wiesel, Elie	<i>The Accident</i> <i>Night</i> <i>Dawn</i>

Anthologies

The Eagle and the Crow: Modern Polish Short Stories

Polish Poetry of the Last Two Decades of Communist Rule: Spoiling Cannibals' Fun

Post-War Polish Poetry

The Chicago Review Special Edition: New Polish Writing

Poetry

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Miłosz, Czesław | <i>Treatise on Poetry</i>
<i>New and Collected Poems (1931-2001)</i> |
| Szyborska, Wisława | <i>View with a Grain of Sand</i> |
| Herbert, Zbigniew | <i>Elegy For The Departure</i> |

Films

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Duras, Marguerite | <i>Aurelia Steiner</i>
<i>Le Camion</i>
<i>India Song</i> |
| Holland, Agnieszka | <i>Europa, Europa</i> |
| Kieslowski, Krzysztof | <i>Blue</i>
<i>The Decalogue</i>
<i>Red</i>
<i>White</i> |
| Lanzmann, Claude | <i>Shoah</i> |
| Polanski, Roman | <i>Knife in the Water</i>
<i>The Pianist</i> |
| Varda, Agnes | <i>Cent et une nuit (101 Nights)</i>
<i>The Gleaners and I</i>
<i>Jacquot</i>
<i>Sans toi ni loi (Vagabond)</i> |
| Wajda, Andrzej | <i>Ashes and Diamonds</i>
<i>A Generation</i>
<i>Kanal</i>
<i>The Promised Land</i>
<i>Man of Marble</i>
<i>Man of Iron</i> |

Reflections: Coming to Teach

After my long bout of study abroad and more than two years living out of suitcases, I decided to dispense with any unnecessary belongings. During the process, I rummaged through some old papers that my mother had salvaged from my elementary school days. According to one document I found, entitled, "All About Me," as an eight year old, I aspired to become a police officer when I grew up. At more than a decade later, I'm not sure if I could foster such a definite answer if I were asked the same question. I certainly don't envision myself patrolling the streets of Knoxville, but I'm not ruling much else out.

Over this last semester, I have experienced what it is to be in the front of the classroom. Nevertheless, I was still somewhat taken aback when Dr. Luprecht opened an Honors student panel last week by introducing me as a "teacher." I suppose I have taken on this role in the classroom, yet I'm not quite ready to hand myself that title.

Now, at the end of my first semester teaching, I finally understand the difficulty of evaluating student work, the fallacy of deeming a professor an expert, and the tireless effort it takes to keep students enthusiastic about what they are learning. Despite the added work and piles of papers to grade, I loved every minute of it. Why, then, am I unsure about joining the ranks of university professors?

I read recently that the average academic publication, even one written by a Harvard University professor, is read by only nine people. To think that my life's work will reach less than a dozen readers is discouraging, to say the least. I don't want to devote every waking moment to research and publication, but I do want to find myself in a classroom. I hope that I will be able to find a balance for a life in academia that is also one involving community activism and service to students in addition to making important contributions to my field.

My ability to teach exhibited itself at a young age. By the time I was in the third grade, I was already writing speeches. At age twelve, I had gained my own office in the school library and the title of "Ms. Ashley, Library Assistant." I feel inexplicably drawn to teach others. Putting this desire on paper for graduate school applications was extremely difficult. The problem with talking about the desire to teach is that one ends up

repeating the abused clichés about wanting to change young peoples lives, to mold and shape their minds. This reason, if it be true, is rather egotistical and is far too great a responsibility for me to undertake as of yet (perhaps ever). Teaching just seems natural to me. As Paul Harrill, my film and video art professor (also a fellow College Scholar), said about his transition from student to teacher, "You want to keep learning, so you switch sides."

I've decided to stop trying to explain why I want to teach and focus on the actual teaching. If I am to teach, then above all, I need to get out there and do it. When I asked Paul Harrill for the key to good teaching, he said this: "Rock and roll and good teachers do the same thing. They blow your mind or, as Jack Black would put it, they make your face melt." If that's what teaching's all about, then you can count me in.

Acknowledgements

First, I must express my gratitude for the courage and inspiration I received from Hubert P. Janicki who first introduced me to the world of Polish literature and film.

I would also like to thank Dr. Karen D. Levy for her endless enthusiasm and energy and for her personal investment in my development as a student and a teacher. I aspire to one day serve students as well as she does and with as much joy in my heart.

The purchase of materials for the Honors seminar, literary colloquy, culture nights, and film festival could not have been made without the generous financial support from the Dick E. and Ann P. Ray Scholarship Fund, the Center for International Education, and the University of Tennessee International House.

Thanks also to Dr. Thomas Broadhead, Dr. Les Essif, Dr. Stephen Blackwell, Dr. Beauvais Lyons, and Dr. Jim Gehlhar for their countless recommendations, input, and resources during my years at the University of Tennessee.

A.R.M.