

Princeton University

HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVING EMERITUS STATUS



May 2021

The biographical sketches were written by staff and
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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In the Nation's Service and the Service of Humanity

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OLGA PETERS HASTY



Olga Peters Hasty, a major scholar of Russian literature and culture, transfers to emeritus status on July 1, 2021, after twenty-eight years in Princeton's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Olga was born in Lakeland, Florida, and grew up in the Washington, D.C. area and in Bad Godesberg, Germany. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar College and received her master's degree from Brown University. Her Yale University Ph.D. dissertation, "Tsvetaeva's Encounter with Rilke," was awarded in the category of "Distinguished." In 1993, Olga joined Princeton as an assistant professor; she was promoted to associate professor in 1999 and became a full professor in 2002.

The major twentieth-century Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva, whose works Nobel Laureate Joseph Brodsky greatly admired, has been the primary focus of Olga's scholarly research. Her other areas of specialization include Golden Age and Silver Age Russian poetry, women's writing, cultural history, film adaptations, and close textual analysis. Olga's publications have appeared in some of the most prestigious university presses and journals in the field of Slavic studies. Her book, *America through Russian Eyes* (Yale University Press, 1988), with Susanne Fusso as co-translator, co-annotator, and co-writer of the introduction, presents travel accounts by Russian writers who visited America around the turn of the twentieth century. With most of its documents appearing in English for the first time, the book offers fresh insights into the American experience and the Russian mind.

Olga's book, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys in the Worlds of the Word* (Northwestern University Press, 1996), explores the rich theme of the myth of Orpheus as master narrative for poetic inspiration, and creative survival in Tsvetaeva's life and work. By delineating the connection between the Orpheus myth and other key mythological and literary figures in the poet's life, Olga makes an important and original scholarly contribution.

About Olga's book, *Pushkin's Tatiana* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), Yale scholar Robert Louis Jackson wrote, "Hasty takes an image, Tatiana's, one that in large part has been frozen in cliché, and dramatically revitalizes our understanding of it and of its deep contiguity with Pushkin's esthetic-philosophical thought." Harvard scholar Stephanie Sandler wrote that *Pushkin's Tatiana* is "an exceptionally interesting and original study of Russian literature's best-known

heroine. Olga Hasty describes, as no one before her, Pushkin's alignment of sexual and creative energy, which in turns sheds new light on his creative process in writing *Eugene Onegin*." *Choice Magazine* designated Olga's book as one of the top academic books of 1999. Also in 1999, she was a co-recipient of the Barbara Heldt Prize, awarded for the best book by a woman in any area of Slavic/Eastern European/Eurasian women's and gender studies. The citation praised her for writing a "pathbreaking book," which "...is beautifully argued and researched and will serve as a model of literary interpretation for years to come."

Olga's book, *How Women Must Write: Inventing the Woman Poet* (Northwestern University Press, 2019), takes the reader from the male Romantic age to a modernist period preoccupied with woman's creativity, but also with its containment. The book shows women as purposeful actors realizing themselves creatively and advancing the woman poet's cause. In this stimulating book, Olga asks readers to rethink the Russian tradition in light of its remarkable women poets and the stories of how they were invented. This book was also awarded a Barbara Heldt Prize in 2020. The commendation, in part, singled out the book for reaching "beyond the field of Russian literary studies," for addressing "...the essential topic of women poets' engagement with the gender norms of their time, which lead[s] them to a place where they could shape their own artistic identity..." and for "lay[ing] out the tools of literary analysis, reinforc[ing] the profundity of her conclusions."

Olga has written book chapters and journal articles that focus on poetry, films, music, and Dostoevsky. Among many other publications, some examples of her work include "Crimes and Punishments: Dostoevski and Bresson"; "The Pushkin of *Opportunity* in the Harlem Renaissance"; "Memory, Consciousness, and Time in Nabokov's *Lolita*"; "Dancing Vowels: Mandelshtam in Mouth"; and articles on Pasternak.

Olga has given lectures in the United States and all over the world. One of these noteworthy occasions was her lecture, "Tsvetaeva and Theater," at the Ingmar Bergman Festival in Stockholm, Sweden, and at the same time, a lecture at the University of Stockholm. She has participated in many international conferences, presenting papers in Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom (at Oxford University and Cambridge University). Her service to the field also includes stints on the editorial boards of professional journals.

Olga's contributions to Princeton's Slavic department, to teaching, and to the University are as impressive as her contributions to scholarship. She served as acting chair of the department, director of graduate studies, and departmental representative. Olga was also Clerk of the Faculty and has served on many University committees.

She has been president of Princeton's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa since 2015. Olga has taught graduate and undergraduate courses across a broad spectrum of Russian literature and culture and beyond, including: medieval Russian literature, Vladimir Nabokov, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian poetry, Russian women writers, drama, Russian film theory, and a Freshman Seminar on forgiveness. Olga always goes above and beyond the call of duty in the time that she gives to students and to colleagues. In 1999, the University lauded her for "Making a Difference in the Lives of Women at Princeton."

Olga is currently at work on a book chapter devoted to French film director Robert Bresson's *Une femme douce*, which is a transmediation of Dostoevsky's story, "A Gentle Creature." Her next book project is a biography of a striking figure from the time of Catherine II of Russia.

Olga has been an exemplary citizen—with her writings and her teaching; in her dedication to the community of scholars, and to the enterprise of conveying knowledge and being intellectually engaged with students' explorations in learning; with her service to the profession and to the University; and in her commitment to serving her local, national, and international communities.

We shall miss Olga and her wry sense of humor. In addition to missing her as a colleague, we shall miss her presence in the department as a decent, considerate, fair, and ethical human being.