Postscript

On Erika Monahan's Leaving the Post of Book Review Editor to CSS

On Standing Your Ground and Serving the Field

It is said among those of us who have played in a garage band growing up, that the fastest way to get the guitar player finally to stop playing during rehearsal is to put a sheet of music in front of him or her. The corollary for those former musicians who turn into history professors and journal editors is that the fastest, surest way to get a colleague never to respond to one of your emails again is to offer him or her the position of book reviews editor. I have been in both positions at one point or other (separated, to be sure, by a couple dozen years), but neither quip is really quite true. At least when it comes to Erika Monahan, who received an email from me inviting her to help me as I came on board as editor-in-chief of *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* back in 2016. She did, truth be told, take her time responding – thinking it over carefully before clicking a response on her keyboard to my offer. She agreed to take the job, and I was relieved and thrilled in equal measures. Instead of running at a full clip away from me – hair on fire, never to reply to my emails again – she stood her ground and became the backbone of the journal. I am delighted to be given the opportunity by the current editor-in-chief, Carol Stevens, to say a proper “Thank You” in print to Erika for her collaboration with me at the journal.

And it is a very sincere and profuse “Thank You.” Over the course of my editorship, Erika brought to us 72 reviews and 7 review articles over 10 issues of the journal. (She commissioned and published even more per issue since Carol has been Editor, but I will let her to do the math on those). These were some of the most challenging reviews to publish, covering books in fields like history, women's studies, religious studies, languages and literatures, and cultural studies, as well as books that span the range of East Slavic history – from the founding of Rus' to the present. She also revived and expanded the “featured reviews” rubric, which gave our authors the chance to draw connections between the book under review and the broader literature, and to insert, as appropriate, their own take on a subject. Erika allowed reviewers to go over the usual word limits when there was a need to, or to review more than one book in a single

review. She even – and here all the rules were thrown out! – allowed footnotes. These reviews were key to our efforts to make *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* a top-tier journal again, and Erika's work to get the most significant books in the broadest possible categories reviewed by the most appropriate colleagues put us on the radar for articles and other kinds of submissions. And it is no easy thing to find reviewers for these increasingly significant books. Potential book reviewers run with hair on fire too when book review editors come calling, but Erika's kind and encouraging ways helped her secure just the right reviewers consistently and reliably. It all worked together – she and I; the reviews and the articles – in one seamless effort to serve the field and do right by our contributors.

And now Erika has decided to move on to other ways of serving the field. She never says no (even when she probably should) and so is a model for the rest of us of how to be collegial, supportive, and tireless. Erika did a great job as book review editor – we all know that – but we should also all know how hard a job that was and why it is so important. If we remember that, we will stand our ground the way she did when an editor-in-chief or book reviews editor next comes calling. And for that example of collegiality, and for her years of truly outstanding service to the journal, I, on behalf of many authors whose books she so carefully and professionally handled, say “Thank You.” Good luck on the next thing, Erika.

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Бурные Аплодисменты

How to follow Russ' eloquent comments! I have nothing to say about garage bands. But I can say that Kat Hill Reischl and I have been so very lucky as editors to have had Erika continue (on drums?) as the steady beat of Book Review Editor, as each of us joined *Canadian American Slavic Studies*.

Let me celebrate, with Russ, Erika's generosity and collegiality (all too often, I am sure, self-sacrificing). Our periodic conversations on Zoom – at odd hours due to time zone differences – cheerfully sharing her expertise, her energy and her hard work with a new editor, were one of the joys of these last 5 issues of *css*. Those chats haven't been about book reviews alone, but about recent publications, our and others' research, conference panels, meetings, the pandemic, spreading the word about *css* in Germany and occasionally the trials and joys

of moving families overseas. For these shared conversations, the journal and I personally both owe her warm thanks.

Erika has been a particularly inspired Book Review editor in numerous ways, commissioning and publishing nearly 130 reviews of individual books and 9 review essays – with several reviews and review essays of her commissioning forthcoming. She has (one might almost say, of course) diligently selected a wide variety of excellent new and forthcoming books to review – covering many places, disciplines, and time periods – in a recent single issue: reviews of books on early modern Russia, Central Asia over the ages, modern eastern Europe, and the Russian permafrost. Beyond this, however, is her discerning and often inspired touch in choosing reviewers for particular books and review essays. It is not always an easy task to persuade someone to write a book review (never mind submit it in timely fashion), but how does anyone decide which colleagues will also write the *best* review of a particular book or group of books? How to decide who can be relied upon to take the time and effort to produce a penetrating overview of how a book fits broadly into a field, or what further possibilities are suggested by a new study? Erika's magic touch in this regard has indeed created a backbone of persistent excellence for the journal. Kat and I look forward with great confidence to the interesting new ways in which the incoming Book Review Editor, Seth Bernstein of the University of Florida, will continue in this role and tradition.

Let us finish by joining with Russ in saying to Erika: "For (your generous) example of collegiality (and hard work), and for (your) years of truly outstanding service to the journal, (Kat and) I, on behalf of many authors whose books you so carefully and professionally handled: "Thank You.""

And all the best, Erika, as you apply these wonderful qualities to other and future commitments.

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Some Thank Yous

It is with mixed feelings that I depart from *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. While I am excited for the challenge of my next editorial role, I will miss being the Book reviews editor for *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. On this business of book reviews, I can't help but echo Pa Bailey's humble wisdom ("It's a Wonderful Life", 1946): I feel that in a small way we are doing something important. Satisfying a fundamental urge. It's deep in the academic psyche to want a sound, considered perspective on a book to help chart one's own engagement with it, and of course, to have one's own book reviewed, and we're helping in that process ...

I will of course continue to be a friend to and reader of the journal. As I depart I am glad for this opportunity to say a number of simple, sincere 'Thank yous' publicly.

Thank you to all the reviewers who have written for the journal over the years. Most of us do this work of reviewing and editing in the margins of a full slate of other duties. I have been humbled by the willingness, the insightful eloquence, and conscientiousness of the reviewers I have worked with over the years. I have learned much from your reviews; thank you for helping me "scratch my generalist itch". Thank you for agreeing to review books; thank you for your work, and for your good humor.

Thank you to Iedske van Coevorden for her unflinching professionalism and high standards, her unfailing efficiency and understanding.

Thank you to the many publishers who facilitate the process by promptly providing unremunerated reviewers with copies of the books they review. It is the humblest of perks for the substantial work of writing a book review.

Thank you to Russ Martin, a scholar who is as generous as he is indefatigable. One of the benefits of this role has been to have a "courtside" view to an excellent editor and scholar in action. Besides the valuable learning, it has been a pleasure to interact every step of the way.

Thank you to Kira Stevens for being such an open-minded and focused, supportive and responsive editor-in-chief. I have so much enjoyed this working relationship that I am a bit sad to move on from it. Yet I am glad to know that the journal is in such excellent hands and I look forward to watching what these pages produce in coming years.

Thank you and best wishes to Seth Bernstein as he steps into the role of Book reviews editor for *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*.

Finally, thank you, dear readers. Please keep reading *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. Please, when Seth Bernstein sends you a book review request,

give it your best consideration. And if there is a book you'd like to review, ask him to consider it.

Erika Monahan

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