

UCLA

Graduate Student
Colloquium in
Armenian Studies

February 2, 2007
UCLA Royce Hall 314

The organizing committee of the Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies (GSCiAS) is pleased to welcome you to today's proceedings. This year's program marks the fifth time this event is being hosted at UCLA, a premier institution for the growing field of Armenology and a leader in interdisciplinary studies. Once again, we hope that the colloquium will foster the development of Armenian Studies, facilitate interaction between graduate students and faculty from various institutions, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and contribute to the professional and academic development of graduate students.

This year's organizing committee has brought together a unique group of scholars from across the globe, including Armenia, Jerusalem, France, Germany, and the USA. Although all the topics are related to Armenian Studies, they represent a wide range of fields from history, art, law, and literature to social and religious studies. We hope that the colloquium will offer a unique opportunity for both the presenters and the audience to engage in academic discussion and illuminate numerous issues in the dynamic and diverse area of Armenian Studies. In this way, we hope to encourage graduate scholarship and provide an arena for the development of new ideas and progress in Armenian Studies.

Once again, we would like to welcome you all: undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and the community at large, to today's program. We hope that each of you will glean something new and leave with an anticipation for future colloquia to come.

Sincerely,

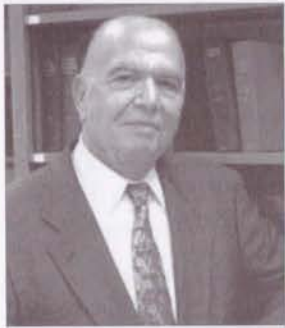
The 2007 GSCiAS Committee

THE UCLA PROGRAM IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

Armenian Studies at UCLA began in 1960 with the appointment of some temporary instructors, including Louise Nalbandian, Kevork Sarafian, and Revl. Sempad Lapajian. Teaching was supported by the bequest of the library of Dr. K.M. Khantamour, which formed the nucleus of the university's rich current holdings in the field. The discipline was augmented in 1962 with the appointment of Professor Richard G. Hovannisian, first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History established in 1987. Teaching in Language and Literature was established on a permanent footing with the appointment of Professor Avedis K. Sanjian in 1965, who guided the development and expansion of this area over the next three decades. In July 2000, Dr. S. Peter Cowe was appointed as his successor.

Thanks to the fundraising campaign spearheaded by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies was founded in 1969 and, as such, has the distinction of being the oldest endowed chair at UCLA. This important milestone inaugurated the graduate program, preparing candidates for the degrees M.A. and Ph.D. The accession of the Minassian collection of manuscripts and printed books in the following year greatly enhanced the program's research capabilities. Classes were supplemented by a series of lectures, symposia, and exhibitions exposing Armenian culture to a broad public.

Since 1997, the regular instruction in Eastern Armenian has complemented teaching in Western Armenian: presently Dr. Anahid Aramouni Keshishian is lecturer in the former and Dr. Hagop Gulludjian in the latter. The following year, a popular undergraduate minor in Armenian Studies was introduced. This was followed by the graduation of the first student to select an Individual Major in Armenian Studies, and the inauguration of the publication *Moutk*. Thanks to the munificence of the Friends of the UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies, we look forward to a course on the archaeological record of early Armenian history to be taught by Alina Aivazyan, a recent doctoral graduate from our sister campus in Berkeley, in Spring Term. Currently, proposals are underway to institute an undergraduate major in Armenian Studies.



Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian

Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian is Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. A member of the UCLA faculty since 1962, he has organized the undergraduate and graduate programs in Armenian and Caucasian history. In 1987, Professor Hovannisian was appointed the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA. From 1978 to 1995, he also served as the Associate Director of G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. The author or editor of twenty volumes and sixty scholarly articles relating to Armenian, Caucasian and Near

Eastern History, Dr. Hovannisian is a Guggenheim Fellow and has received many honors for his scholarship, civic activities, and advancement of Armenian Studies, including election to membership in the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and Encyclicals and Medals from their Holinesses, the Catholicos of all Armenians in Etchmiadzin and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia in Lebanon. Dr. Hovannisian is a founder and three-time president of the Society for Armenian Studies and represented the State of California on the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) from 1978 to 1994. He serves on the board of directors of nine scholarly and civic organizations and has made numerous television and radio appearances on issues relating to the Armenian people and Armenian, Near Eastern, and Caucasian history. He also served as the historical consultant for the National Geographic Magazine feature article on Armenia.



Dr. S. Peter Cowe

Dr. S. Peter Cowe, faculty advisor of the colloquium, is Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA. Previously, he has held positions in Armenology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Columbia University, New York. His research interests include medieval Armenian intellectual history, modern Armenian nationalism, the Armenian lyric tradition, and Armenian film and theater. The author of five books in the field and

editor of five, he is now completing an investigation of the Armenian Republic's post-Soviet publishing industry. A regular contributor to scholarly periodicals, he is co-editor of the Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies. Currently, he is collaborating on a study of the earliest extant Armenian encyclopaedia, for which he has received a NEH fellowship, an anthology of contemporary women writers from the Balkans, and a project sponsored by the Septuaginta Unternehmung of Gottingen.

Anahid Aramouni Keshishian



Dr. Anahid Aramouni Keshishian is Lecturer in Eastern Armenian at UCLA. She was awarded the "UCLA Distinguished Lecturer Award" by the UCLA Academic Senate Committee on Teaching for the year 2005. Dr. Keshishian has had a varied career as a researcher, first in the Museum of the Ararat valley of Ejmiatsin and later in the archives of the Armenian Review in Boston. She was the publisher and the editor of The Eighties, a social and literary magazine, as well as the editor of the student magazine, Moutk, published by UCLA NELC. She is a member of the executive council of the Society for Armenian Studies, the Middle East Studies Association, and Arvest Art and Literary Association. Dr. Keshishian has written extensively on Armenian literary themes and on social and political issues. Her book on American-Armenian author Hagop Karapents was published in 1999 by the Academy of Sciences in Armenia. She is the founder and artistic director of the Los Angeles based art organization, Arena Productions. Through Arena Productions, Dr. Keshishian has translated, directed and produced several Armenian plays. She is the Editor in Chief of the literary journal, Random Agenda, which features works by a diverse group of creative writers.

Hagop Gulludjian



Prof. Hagop Gulludjian is Lecturer in Western Armenian at UCLA and Associate Professor of Armenian Studies at the Oriental Studies School of the Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, where he initiated Armenian Studies classes in 1992. He has researched and occasionally published about a wide range of topics concerning Armenology, as well as the interrelation of technology and culture. He has been the publisher and editor of numerous periodical publications, and has also assisted the Argentine government in technology policy issues. His current research is focused on medieval Armenian literature; Virtuality, culture and diaspora; Armenian historical narrative; and Armenian parallels to Anglo-Saxon literature.



Sevan Yousefian,
History, UCLA (USA)
(sevanchik_77@yahoo.com)

Sevan Yousefian received his B.A. in History with a minor in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2000. He received his M.A. in History from Yerevan State University in 2004. Currently he is a second year Ph.D. student in the Department of History at UCLA and a member of the Society for Armenian Studies. His interests include nineteenth and twentieth century Armenian history, modern Middle Eastern history, Soviet history, and migration studies.

The Postwar Repatriation Movement of Armenians to Soviet Armenia (1946-1948)

This paper is part of a work in progress which investigates the migration of approximately 100,000 Armenians from Europe and the Middle East to Soviet Armenia following World War II. From 1946-1948, tens of thousands of Armenians sold their homes, packed their belongings, and made the journey to Armenia from countries such as Iran, Syria, Bulgaria, France, and even the United States. The Soviet government organized this migration with substantial aid from diaspora organizations. Diasporan parties clashed over their positions towards the repatriation movement and their willingness to support and work with the Soviet republic.

This paper examines the possible motivations of the Soviet government for allowing the migration to take place, the positions of and tensions between various Armenian political parties in the diaspora during the campaign, and the role diasporan parties and organizations played in raising the necessary funds. Major sources for this paper include the contemporary publications of Armenian-American political parties, along with various Soviet and western secondary sources.

Katy Pearce

Communications, University of California
Santa Barbara (USA)
(kpearce@umail.ucsb.edu)



Katy Pearce received her B.A. in Armenian Studies and American Culture with a minor in Soviet History from the University of Michigan in 2001. She received her M.A. in International Studies and Diplomacy from the University of London, School for Oriental and African Studies, in 2006. Currently she is a first year Ph.D. student in the Department of Communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Katy's research interests include Armenia, Azerbaijan, political communication, information technologies, Web 2.0, information technologies for international development, state-media relations, NGOs, and post-socialist political culture. Katy is a member of CESS, IRA, NCA, ACA, and ICA. She is also a managing editor for Neweurasia, a network of weblogs coordinated and written by bloggers from Central Asia and the Caucasus together with their peers around the globe.

The Impact of International Financial Institutions, Organizations and States' Democratization Agenda upon Media Legislation in the Post-Communist States of Armenia and Azerbaijan

Western states, international organizations, and financial institutions wield control over developing states through the finance conditionality system, which includes many stipulations for more democratic institutions within states that accept financial assistance. In these agreements the terms cannot be negotiated and therefore the definition of democracy set forth by these states, organizations and institutions becomes the only acceptable way to run a state. I will examine the free press aspect of the democratization agenda using the experiences of two former Soviet states, Armenia and Azerbaijan, to illustrate the impact which the international community has had. Part of this democracy design includes creating a free press and legislation for that press. However, Armenia and Azerbaijan manipulate the democracy-based legislation to control the media.

These states are incapable, at the current time, of meeting the demands foreign powers place on them to create a democracy-based free press. The corruption and post-Socialist mentality is too great to overcome. An alternative model for a free press, based on the experiences of Mediterranean Europe, may be more appropriate, but this cannot emerge if the pressure from external powers continues to mold states in the democracy framework. Examining the relationship between the state and the media in these new states will illuminate the larger issues of democratic conditions in post-Socialist states and the subsequent performance of democracy.



Andrew Kzirian

J.D., Villanova University (USA)
(antranig.kzirian@gmail.com)

Andrew D. Kzirian, Esq. currently serves as Executive Director of the Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region. He received his J.D. degree from Villanova University School of Law and his B.A. in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania, where he specialized in comparative studies involving Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabagh. Andrew organized and coordinated academic conferences on human rights issues related to genocide and international law at both universities. He also worked in the private sector on security matters litigation, product liability claims and pharmaceutical litigation issues. Andrew writes, lectures, and presents on legal challenges related to Armenian issues, including the First Amendment and denial of the Armenian Genocide in the United States and the international and domestic legal issues involved with dual citizenship.

**Dual Citizenship for the Republic of Armenia:
Posing Questions of Law and Circumstance**

Citizenship represents the quintessential expression of nationality in our geopolitically divided world. It serves as a lightning rod for political beliefs and a practical mechanism for taxes, military service, voting and other vital civic duties. Armenia is a nation divided numerically into a homeland on one side and substantial Diaspora communities on the other. After the lift of a previous ban on dual citizenship through referendum, Armenia now faces challenges and debate that await in the realm of institutionalizing dual citizenship. A carefully designed dual citizenship scheme requires that we carefully examine other similarly situated countries to determine successful policies and their effects.

This paper considers the possibility and advantages of dual citizenship in the Republic of Armenia. In the paper I analyze the historical costs and benefits of dual citizenship in the context of comparisons to various countries, with emphasis on voting and political rights. In demonstrating the values of dual citizenship under international and treaty law, I propose that a limited dual citizenship framework can positively contribute to renewed political, cultural, economic and sociological growth in Armenia. In this way, the idea of dual citizenship, properly tamed, can clearly serve as a foundation for overall improvement in Armenia.



Daniel Larison

History, The University of Chicago (USA)
(larisond@uchicago.edu)

Daniel Larison received his B.A. in History and Religion from Hampden-Sydney College in 2001 and completed his M.A. in Social Sciences at the University of Chicago in 2002. Currently he is a fourth-year Ph.D. student and doctoral candidate in the History Department at the University of Chicago, where he is writing his dissertation on the history of monotheletism, and representations and uses of authority in the acts of the sixth ecumenical council. His interests include Byzantine and Armenian religion and culture, doctrinal controversy, heresiology, patristics and identity construction.

**The Two Faces of Armenian Monotheletism: The Role of Doctrine in 7th
Century Byzantine-Armenian Church Relations**

Late 7th century Armenia was contested ground for multiple rival confessions that held differing doctrines about the nature of Christ, two of which were Armenian forms of a Christological doctrine called monotheletism (one will in Christ) which played important roles in affecting the terms of ecclesiastical relations with the Byzantines. One of the discourses of the Armenian catholicos, Sahak III, expresses an Armenian monotheletism consistent with the Christology of Julian of Halicarnassus, which prevailed in the Armenian Church. A little-studied anonymous seventh-century Armenian chronicle (Matenadaran 2679) seems to show sympathy for the downfall of Byzantine monotheletes after the sixth ecumenical council which condemned the doctrine in 681, suggesting pro-imperial sentiments in the chronicle's audience. After introducing the terms of the religious controversies of the seventh century and explaining the historical context of the Armenian church of the 680s and 690s, this paper will show the connections between the declining state of the relationship of the Byzantine and Armenian churches. It also discusses the success of Sahak III in affirming his Armenian form of monotheletism in opposition to the Byzantine condemnation of their version of the same doctrine and his rejection of the church union forced on Armenia by the Byzantine emperor Justinian II. This paper reassesses the substance of the ecclesiastical union between Constantinople and Dvin during the latter half of the 7th century and traces the doctrinal defense of Armenian ecclesiastical independence from Byzantium.

2007 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies - Friday, February 2, 2007 - UCLA Royce Hall 314

Opening Remarks 10:00am – 10:15am

Shushan Karapetyan - Project Director, 2007 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies

Dr. S. Peter Cowe - Professor and Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies at UCLA

Session 1 - Sociopolitical Issues Relating to the Armenian Republic

Chair: **Talar Chahinian** (Comparative Literature, UCLA)

10:20 – 10:40 **Sevan Yousefian** - History, UCLA (USA)
"The Postwar Repatriation Movement of Armenians to Soviet Armenia (1946-1948)"

10:40 – 11:00 **Katy Pearce** - Communications, University of California Santa Barbara (USA)
"The Impact of International Financial Institutions, Organizations and States' Democratization Agenda Upon Media Legislation in the Post-Communist States of Armenia and Azerbaijan"

11:00 – 11:20 **Andrew Kzirian** - J.D., Villanova University (USA)
"Dual Citizenship for the Republic of Armenia: Posing Questions of Law and Circumstance"

11:20 – 11:50 Discussion

11:50 – 1:00 Lunch

Session 2 - Armenian Thought and Culture through the Ages

Chair: **Tamar Boyadjian** (Comparative Literature, UCLA)

1:00 – 1:20 **Daniel Larison** - History, The University of Chicago (USA)
"The Two Faces of Armenian Monotheism: The Role of Doctrine in 7th Century Byzantine-Armenian Church Relations"

1:20 – 1:40 **Mikayel Arakelyan** - Indo-Iranian and Armenian Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)
"The Theme of Intercession in the Iconographical Program of Armenian Gospel Books of the 16th-17th centuries"

1:40 – 2:00 **Hasmik Khalapyan** - History, Central European University (Hungary)
"The Politics and Social Agendas of Fashion among Ottoman Armenians at the End of the 19th Century"

2:00 – 2:30 Discussion

2:30 – 3:00 Coffee Break

Session 3 - Language and Literature

Chair: **Janelle Pulczynski** (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA)

3:00 – 3:20 **Luciné Palyan** - Philological Studies, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (France)
"Nature in Armenian Why-Tales: Translation and Study of Selected Etiological Tales and Traditions of Armenia"

3:20 – 3:40 **Anush Yeghiazaryan** - Sociology, Konstanz University (Germany)
"Eastern and Western Armenians: A Case of Intercultural Communication?"

3:40 – 4:00 **Anoush Mkrtchyan** - Comparative Literature, Abeghian Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences (Armenia)
"Armenian Literature at the Dawn of the 21st Century"

4:00 – 4:30 Discussion

4:30 – 6:00 Reception



Mikayel Arakelyan

Indo-Iranian and Armenian Studies,
Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)
(arakelm@mail.com)

Mikayel Arakelyan received his B.A. and M.A. in Design and Painting from the Yerevan State Institute of Fine and Dramatic Arts in 1992 and his Ph.D. in Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia in

2004. Currently, he is working on his second Ph.D. in the Department of Indo-Iranian and Armenian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research concentrates on the Armenian School of miniature painting at New Julfa in the 17th century. Many of the manuscripts he is studying are located in library collections housed in Armenia, Europe, the Middle East and the USA. He has presented six conference papers and published eight articles in journals in Yerevan, Paris, Jerusalem, Moscow, Leiden and Los Angeles. Mikayel is also a member of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes.

The Theme of Intercession in the Iconographical Program of Armenian Gospel Books of the 16th-17th Centuries

Armenian miniaturists of the 16th-17th centuries based themselves on iconographical schemes of their predecessors. The artists of the scriptoria of Vaspurakan and New Julfa possessed a great skill in the interpretation of evangelical scenes and expanded the cycle of images in illustrated manuscripts by adding new themes. Some examples include, "Genealogy of Christ", "Flight to Egypt" and "Second Coming". The compositions with juxtaposed images of Christ and the Mother of God, represented in bust and facing each other, only appear in the Four Gospels, as far as my examination of 14 manuscripts has revealed. Their iconography and style were formed in the Vaspurakan region during the mid-16th century, probably under the influence of iconography originating in Italy. The miniaturists of New Julfa continued to imitate this iconographical scheme until the end of the 17th century and preserved all the characteristic of the European and the Vaspurakan schools. It is certain that these icon-portrait types had not previously existed in Armenian illuminated manuscripts. Investigation shows that such unusual types of images of Christ and the Virgin are connected to the "Intercessory" theme, an important explanation of which is found in the Armenian apocryphical text of the Vision of Mary and in the Hymnal. In my opinion, it is also appropriate to connect this pair of images with the theme of Deesis: the images represent the culmination of a pictorial program of narrative miniatures, immediately following the scene of the "Last Judgment".



Hasmik Khalapyan

History, Central European University (Hungary)
(hkhalapyan@yahoo.com)

Hasmik Khalapyan received her B.A. in English and French Linguistics from the Yerevan State Institute of Foreign Languages in 1995. She received her M.A. in English Literature from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 2000. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the History Department of the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary. The title of her dissertation is "The Woman's Question and Women's Movement among Ottoman Armenians, 1875-1914." Currently she is teaching at the Graduate School of Psychology, Yerevan State University.

The Politics and Social Agendas of Fashion among Ottoman Armenians at the End of the 19th Century

Close contact with Europe, imported goods, and transfer of fashion technology brought a drastic change in the preferences for fashion among Ottoman Armenians. New Europeanized trends were observed both in social manners and apparel, revealing the exposure to new styles, wealth and social position of families. Salons and balls became a common form of entertainment for certain layers of society, turning the events into demonstrations of "refined" manners and fashion shows. Becoming "fashionable" was evaluated ambiguously by "progressive" reformers. On the one hand, pride was attached to the acknowledgement that Armenians and Greeks were the first to introduce European fashion into the Ottoman Empire. On the other, European fashions made reformers uncomfortable since what had hitherto been considered "Armenian culture" was rapidly giving way to new norms and clothing. Criticism was vented against women who were expected to be both preservers of culture and markers of change. Using exclusively primary sources, this paper examines the meaning of fashion in the Ottoman context in general and the Ottoman Armenian context in particular. It approaches fashion as a marker of westernization to address the "cultural" and gender conflicts behind the change.



Luciné Palyan

Philological Studies, Ecole Pratique des
Hautes Etudes (France)
(p_lusine@freenet.am)

Luciné Palyan received her B.A. in English Language and Literatures with minors in German from ISL de Tunis in 2001. She was employed as a foreign language teacher by the French University in Armenia and the European Regional Academy.

In 2002, she received a scholarship to continue her studies in Paris. She graduated from the Université Denis Diderot with an M.A. in Experimental Phonetics in 2003. Currently she is a fourth year Ph.D. student in Philological Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (department of Armenian Studies), Paris. She is still teaching and working as a freelance conference interpreter in Yerevan. Her interests include literary translations from Armenian into French.

Nature in Armenian Why-Tales: Translation and Study of Selected Etiological Tales and Traditions of Armenia

The Armenian land, with its wide sunny fields, its mountains with eternal snows and unreachable peaks and its cool green mountain slopes, had been one of the main factors contributing to the origin and development of oral traditions among primitive Armenians. The cult of nature expressed through animistic and totemistic representations remained not only in the beliefs and superstitions of the people, but also left an impact on all branches of the rich Armenian folklore such as traditions, legends and tales.

From the very beginning of his existence, man was conscious of the various traits of the natural elements surrounding him. His observation of different species supplied him with their simplest, most immediate and most memorable characteristics. In literature in general, and in oral lore in particular, the same characteristics paved the way for the creation of tales describing the origins of Nature and its elements. My presentation addresses the creation and characteristics of Nature and its manifestations such as the physical world, heavenly bodies, flora, and fauna found in Armenian why-tales and etiological traditions. These why-tales are essentially a reflection of beliefs, creeds and customs still present among common Armenian culture and people.

Since there exist no anthologies of Armenian etiological tales, the texts of my primary sources derive from Aram Ghanalanyan's *Avandapatum*. This book is devoted to one of the oldest and most widespread genres categorized as folkloric traditions, compiled from numerous ethnographic publications, travel books, periodicals and other sources.

Anush Yeghiazaryan

Sociology, Konstanz University (Germany)
(Anush.Yeghiazaryan@uni-konstanz.de)



Anush Yeghiazaryan received her B.A. in Sociology from Yerevan State University in 1999, and her M.A. in 2001. She worked at Yerevan State University of Engineering as a lecturer of Sociology from 2001-2002. In 2002, she won a DAAD Scholarship and began studying at the University of Konstanz.

Currently she is working on her Ph.D. at the University of Konstanz. Anush is also involved in activities of the research group "Sociology of knowledge" and the International Office of Konstanz University. She teaches Russian courses at the Volkshochschule and takes part in the events organized by the Armenian community, including teaching Armenian language classes at a summer school for Armenian children in Germany.

Eastern and Western Armenians: A Case of Intercultural Communication?

The issue of finding a language common to all Armenians has always been a concern. Do Armenians in different parts of the world understand each other or do the different Armenian communities have a totally different identity and ethnic awareness?

The problem of Armenia's division into eastern and western sectors is very old, and certain facets of the broader phenomenon may be elucidated through the disciplines of literature, language, and art. The aspect this paper will focus on is communication. How do Armenians communicate and what are the main problems in communication at the present time? I will employ concepts from Thomas Luckmann's sociology of knowledge to analyze and discuss particular difficulties arising from differences in interpretation. Both communities speak about the same topic, but their mutual comprehension is vitiated by the diverse meanings they accord to the same terms.

Memory of the Genocide is a given in Armenian circles. Indeed, it is one of the prime factors that unite all Armenians, however it is also one of the main sources of divergence, since East and West Armenians think of and remember the Genocide in very different ways. I consider the question of the utmost importance and as clearly requiring a special study, as the communication gap expands with every generation, the distance between them widens, and people develop an increasing sense of estrangement from one other. Granted its significance as a shared symbol, my investigation seeks to assist in reinforcing links between the two major Armenian communities over the Genocide.



Anoush Mkrtchyan

Comparative Literature, Abeghian Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences (Armenia)
(mkrtchyananoush@mail.ru)

Anoush Mkrtchyan received her M.A. in Russian Language and Literature and English from the V. Brussov Yerevan State Linguistic University, in

2003. Currently she is working on her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the M. Abeghian Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences, Armenia. Her dissertation in progress is entitled "A Comparative Analysis of American Drama of 20th Century and European Theatre of the Absurd." Her interests include 20th century Armenian, American and European literature, as well as art and literary translations. Her research includes Russian literature-in particular, works by Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Aytmatov, and Bulgakov.

Armenian Literature at the Dawn of the 21st Century

Many critics in Armenia still apply the term contemporary to the literature of the 70s and early 80s, when Sevak, Shiraz, Sahyan and Matevosyan were at the height of their creative power. My paper focuses on contemporary Armenian literature, in the literal sense of the word, created within the past 5 years. It foregrounds the "notorious" writers of Armenia at the turn of the 21st century. Usually referred to as "Bnagirtsis," their name derives from the name of the controversial literary journal *Bnagir* where they were regularly published, whose editorial policy is "Texts which are not published in other places because of frivolous content find a home here [*Bnagir*]" (ArmeniaNow.com).

Established in 2002, *Bnagir* lasted about 4 years, producing 9 issues. Although often labeled as "trash literature" by senior men of letters because of its explicit content, *Bnagir* sparked interest beyond the narrow literary circles, drew the common reader's attention and became one of the most controversial Armenian literary periodicals.

Despite its groundbreaking appearance in the literature of post-Soviet Armenia, the phenomenon of *Bnagir* has mainly been discussed in the mass media. In this respect, my paper is an attempt to fill a gap in Armenian literary criticism. I have chosen to elaborate on the works which shaped *Bnagir's* image. Selected authors include Karen Karslyan, Violet Grigoryan, Vahan Ishkhanyan, Vahe Avetian and Gohar Nikoghosyan, based on public response, as well as my own preferences.

Armenian Graduate Students Association at UCLA

The Armenian Graduate Students Association (AGSA) at UCLA was established in January of 2002. The Association seeks to enhance the graduate student experience at UCLA through academic and professional development, networking, and mentorship through the organization of events relevant to the Armenian community and Armenian issues. It is a student-run organization which strongly encourages member-initiated programming.

During the past academic term, the AGSA at UCLA held its sixth annual Mentorship Series event, and held a vigil in honor of Hrant Dink. Presently, various AGSA members are in the planning phases for a Law Panel, a Genocide Recognition Event, and a Science Lecture Series for the near future, amongst numerous other events.

In order to help provide more professional development as well as networking opportunities, the AGSA at UCLA maintains open lines of communications with the various Armenian community and professional organizations such as the Armenian Bar Association, the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America, as well as the Armenian Bruin Alumni Association.

The AGSA at UCLA is particularly proud of its annual Graduate Student Colloquia in Armenian Studies, as this event requires a tremendous amount of patient planning and foresight. The event is also unique in the western U.S.

As in the past, we hope that this year's Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies serves as a great inspiration to our current members as well as a for future Armenian student group programming.

Please visit our homepage at
<http://gsa.asucla.ucla.edu/~agsa/>
(new website is under construction),
or contact us at
agsaucla@ucla.edu

if you would like more information regarding the AGSA at UCLA, its goals, activities, and/or how to keep in contact with us.

We look forward to hear from you!

**Graduate Student Colloquium in
Armenian Studies
2007 Committee**



Top Row: Sherly Mosessian, Arpi Siyahian, Tamar Boyadjian, Sevan Yousefian, Shushan Karapetyan, Janelle Pulczynski; *Bottom Row:* Talar Chahinian, Lilit Keshishyan, Myrna Douzjian; *Not Shown:* S. Peter Cowe (Faculty Advisor), Jean Murachanian, Ramela Abbamontian, Ara Soghomonian

Acknowledgments

*The organizing committee of the
2007 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies
would like to thank the sponsors of today's program:*

Campus Programs Committee of the Program Activities Board
Graduate Division of UCLA

UCLA Center for European and Eurasian Studies

National Association of Armenian Studies and Research

UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies

UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

UCLA Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

UCLA Center for the Study of Religion

UCLA Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Program in Indo-European Studies

UCLA Department of Art History

UCLA Department of Comparative Literature

UCLA Department of History

Friends of the UCLA Program in Armenian Language and Culture

Special Thanks to:

Janis Guzman and Pam Cysner
Center for Student Programming

Chakib Chamaa
UCLA Travel Center

Yeznik Tamazyan, Flor De Cafe Bakery
Vartkes Boyadjian, Zarro Chicken & Wraps
Khoren Aramouni, I-Ben Printing
&
Tatian's Travel

NOTES