

## **EAAS Postgraduate Travel Grant Report (2024)**

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**Host Institution: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague**

**Dates: September 16<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

In September 2024, I spent two weeks at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague, which was made possible by the generous support of the European Association for American Studies through its Entra-European Grant program.

My visit to the Faculty of Arts was a part of my overall research for my doctoral dissertation which aims to define and analyze the American short story cycle in the post-war period. Thus, my primary task during this visit was to seek help from distinguished scholars in the fields of Short Story Studies and American Literary Studies and to consult relevant materials from the faculty's library. The specific purpose of my stay at the Faculty of Arts was to focus on two chapters of my dissertation that include theoretical considerations of the short story cycle from the perspective of genre theory, structuralism and narratology, and approaches to specific American texts belonging to this genre.

I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Clare Wallace who is a scholar of the short story as well as British and Irish literature. During our meetings, Professor Wallace offered her guidance on the theoretical framework of my project and examined its outline. She advised me to theoretically differentiate the short story from the novel and incorporate that differentiation into my definition of the short story cycle. Likewise, she drew my attention to how different authors of the cycle distinguished the form they were developing from both the novel and the short story collection. Additionally, she encouraged me to focus on the representations of time and plot structure in both the short story and the short story cycle as differentiating characteristics.

Likewise, I had the opportunity to meet Professor Hana Ulmanova who is an expert on Southern and Jewish-American literature. Professor Ulmanova offered her advice on the structure and theoretical framework of my project and suggested that I devote an entire chapter to different theorists in the field of narratology so that I could carefully choose concepts and theoretical models best suited for the analysis of the short story cycle. As my dissertation focuses on Eudora

Welty, Flannery O'Connor and Bernard Malamud, Professor Ulmanova advised me to examine the notion of the grotesque, the epiphany and its secular significance in O'Connor's fiction and their relation to the short story cycle as a genre. In the case of Malamud, she drew my attention to the representation of the figure of the Wandering Jew and its relationship to the cyclicity of the form in question.

Lastly, the faculty granted me access to its libraries where I had the opportunity to consult a significant number of studies and articles about the short story cycle that contributed immensely to my project. Thus, I further developed my methodological approach by including my findings on genre criticism in the case of the short story cycle which stresses the importance of examining the genre of each of the constituent stories within a cycle and their interrelatedness. Likewise, I had the opportunity to read a series of lectures by Alexander Veselovsky whose development of Historical Poetics influenced my methodological approach to the cycle as a genre arising out of specific socio-cultural conditions in the United States.

To summarize, this visit has enabled me to expand and systematize the theoretical framework behind my dissertation, and to select relevant elements of narrative for my analyses. I am deeply thankful to the Faculty of Arts and its Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, the professors who devoted their time to my project, as well as to the European Association for American Studies for this immense opportunity to expand, improve and deepen my research.