Kelcey Parker
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Faculty Research Grant, Summer 2007
Closing Report

Description of grant-supported activity

In November 2006 I was awarded a Faculty Research Grant to work on revisions of “Three Hundred Crowns: A Novel” during the summer of 2007. The novel is set in modern-day Prague, and the city serves as a symbolic landscape for the story of Angela, a thirty-something American tourist who begins a relationship with her tour guide and then becomes a guide herself. The novel is presented as a mock tour in which Angela guides the reader through her story of love, friendship, and life-altering choices. As a city shedding its communist past and embracing a capitalist future, Prague functions as a site for exploring complex constructions of ideology, identity, and historical narrative. The grant provided time to revise key aspects of the novel and to research the publishing industry.

Were you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.

Yes, I completed the project. I added new scenes, cut others, and even moved chapters. I added new details and expanded key motifs. I also spent my time researching literary agents and the publishing industry, and composing query letters. The query letters proved almost as challenging as the novel revisions because I had to learn and adapt the proper format, which includes condensing a 300-page novel into one paragraph with a focus on the marketplace. I wrote several drafts of query letters and was ready to begin contacting agents by the end of the summer.

Did, or will, the project result in a specific product — a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc? If so, please describe and indicate state of development.

In October 2007, I entered my revised novel (under the new title, Prague Spring) in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award sponsored by Amazon.com and Penguin Publishers. The novel was selected as a Semi-finalist, and an excerpt was made available for download on Amazon.com.

The goal of the project remains book publication. In the fall of 2007, I began to contact literary agents and received some interest but no commitment. I will continue to contact agents and shall expand my submissions to independent and university presses.