

NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile.htm

THE MAN WHO BROUGHT RUSSIAN CLASSICS TO THE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER: AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDY KAUFMAN

Interviewer: Lydia Stone



Andrew Kaufman

Andrew Kaufman, an expert in Tolstoy who teaches at the University of Virginia, has conceived and runs a remarkably successful program in which his U-Va students, after studying classics of Russian literature, facilitate discussion groups with residents of a juvenile detention center on the “accursed questions” addressed in those works, focusing on their relevance to the young inmates’ lives. (Yes, the residents are also asked to read these works and, to all appearances, generally do so.) After an article featuring this program was published in The Washington Post, Andy was deluged by requests for interviews with publications of considerably higher circulation than SlavFile. As a mark of our gratitude for his agreeing to talk to us, we have promised to try to ask questions less likely to be put by interviewers with a more general focus. Readers seeking more information about his ideas and program may find it in Washington Post and NPR interviews. To see the reading list and study questions for this course click www.scribd.com/doc/154548098/Andy-s-Reading-List.

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SF: We gather that this program is in high demand from University of Virginia students and detention center residents and that measured results look very promising. What in your experience with teaching Russian literature led you to believe that this would be the case?

AK: This class actually came about as a result of my long-time interest in teaching Russian literature to my University of Virginia students in a way that would allow them to connect more deeply with the material. I wanted to make the humanities relevant to them. At one point during this journey, I happened to be invited to lead a class in a prison about *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. It was a transformative experience for me, as a teacher and a reader. I saw Tolstoy’s novella

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INTERVIEW WITH ANDY KAUFMAN

in a new light after that experience. My appreciation was enriched precisely because I was encountering the work in an unfamiliar environment with an unfamiliar group of people. I likened this to the literary technique of *ostranenie*—making the familiar appear unfamiliar—as a means of getting readers to attend to what is being described. And I began to think about what would happen if I created a course in which my students were put into a similarly unfamiliar environment and asked to discuss Russian literature with people who come from very different backgrounds than they. Might they, too, have similar revelations about the literature? And so, that's how my course, "Books Behind Bars: Life, Literature, and Leadership," at the University of Virginia was born. I wasn't sure four years ago what impact this course would have on university students and the incarcerated youth. Now that I see the impact it has, in fact, been having, I remain convinced that Russian literature can become a vehicle for positive personal transformation and social change for an unusually wide range of readers.

SF: Given the general opinion in the United States (not to mention the Russian Federation) that the 19th century classics are far too ponderous and difficult to appeal to even academically successful young people, did you encounter significant resistance from authorities to putting this program into effect, not to mention funding it? How did you overcome this resistance?

AK: Absolutely I encountered resistance. "Russian literature?" asked the then-Superintendent of Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center when I first pitched him the idea. "What in the world will our residents get out of it?" But he also was a fairly entrepreneurial guy and decided to take a risk. Having seen the result of a one-day pilot, in which both residents and staff came away energized and intellectually stimulated, he invited me back for the full semester pilot. And then I was invited back again, and then again. We've just completed our fourth year of offering the course, and our third year of offering it at Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center.

SF: Was there significant initial class antagonism on the part of the residents to the student discussion leaders, given the elite reputation of U-Va? How was this overcome?

AK: Both groups of students brought their stereotypes about the other. Although they didn't admit it to themselves, the U-Va students had many assumptions about "juvenile delinquents"—rough, unintelligent, mean—and the Beaumont residents had their ideas about U-Va students—elitist, stuck-up, distant. Both stereotypes were quickly shattered, as my students discovered the residents to be thoughtful, intelligent, respectful, and creative, and the residents saw that my students treated them as peers with something of value to contribute to conversations about literature and life. It was through the power of their growing bonds and authentic conversations with one another that the stereotypes fell away.

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SF: The actual factors that may contribute to your popularity and positive outcome with the residents are legion: 1) Distraction from the undoubtedly monotonous life in the center; 2) Feeling of accomplishment for being able to tackle a subject considered difficult and abstruse by the world in general; 3) Respectful treatment and opportunity to interact with successful (“role model”) peers (including, one assumes, some females); 4) Opportunity to discuss and consider alternate takes on real-life questions in a non-judgmental setting; 5) The attraction of the superficial “story line” in the works read; and 6) The takes on “accursed questions” presented in the works.

Do you have some opinion on how much of your success is due specifically to the qualities of the actual works studied? Would you dare to conduct this program among at-risk teenagers on the outside subject to all the distractions of 21st century life?

AK: An excellent question, and one I and our researchers of the course think about often. I would say that all of the factors you mentioned play some role in the positive outcomes of the program. To which I would add: Wonderful, let’s continue to offer programs to incarcerated youth, which have that combination of elements: novelty, opportunities for self-actualization, respect, positive role-modeling, the freedom to discuss topics without the fear of judgment, the possibility for serious self-reflection, and a good story as the foundation of it all.

Regarding Russian literature, I do think the depth of the works, the “accursed questions” they raise, and their foreignness all play an important role in the power of the conversations they generate. Would contemporary urban literature work in the same way? I doubt it, because it’s not a stretch. It’s a mirror, and these incarcerated youth need opportunities to develop new paradigms and understandings of life, not reinforce the ones they already know.

And as for offering this program to teenagers on the outside, I don’t have an answer. We will experiment with that. In the meantime, my hunch is that, yes, it will work. Perhaps differently, but it will work. Why do I think so? Just imagine a teenager—any teenager—who is offered an educational opportunity that contains all of the elements you list above. They don’t get such opportunities very often, even in school. My guess is that it would make an impression and have an impact.

SF: Reading level and familiarity with cultural context do make a difference. It would be disingenuous to assume that all the residents were comparable in this respect to your U-Va students. How do you deal with bringing them up to speed?

AK: That is one of our biggest challenges. A handful—about a third—of the residents are already avid readers. Some have even read Russian novels on the side in their spare time. But the majority are at about a 9th grade reading level. That’s not very high for somebody reading *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* or *Ward No. 6*. But it’s also not impossible. We make sure that their teachers and librarians at the facility work with them during the week before the residents meet my students. The purpose of these meetings is to assist the residents with basic issues of vocabulary and comprehension. And then my students don’t always try to “cover” the whole work, but rather try to “uncover” it by focusing on short passages which contain broader themes in the work. By means of such close readings, the residents learn to better appreciate literature as literature, and they are afforded the opportunity to talk about some of the deeper layers of meaning in the work without necessarily having fully mastered the whole thing.

Finally, we try to bring in as much cultural background material about Russia as possible. The residents find this interesting, and it adds a dimension to the fiction that they can connect to. They love to hear Russian spoken and written on the page, so much so that at least one of them picked up a copy of *Russian for Dummies*, of which I am co-author, from the facility library and taught himself to count in Russian!

SF: If the student discussion leaders play a significant role in interpreting works to residents, do you make any effort to make sure the students are all on the same page? (All Slavists have encountered “quirky” interpretations, even among the highly educated.)

AK: My students do not play a significant role in guiding the residents’ interpretation of the works. And they do not “teach.” Their job is to facilitate discussion and creative activities that help the residents develop their own interpretations and connections to the works. My students challenge the residents if they disagree with something they’ve said, and the residents challenge my students. This is a true community of learners who grapple with texts that are foreign to both of them.

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I offer my guidance during the preparation phase of the course, telling students how other scholars have interpreted various works and how I interpret them, but I leave it at that. Students must develop their own interpretations or, if they are still uncertain, be able to articulate that uncertainty. Only in this way do conversations with the residents remain authentic, rather than staged and “teacherly.” My students quickly learn that no single person or class of people has ultimate authority in the face of such questions. Everybody is engaged as equals in a process of shared inquiry and mutual discovery about literature. And indeed, mutual discovery is what this class is all about.

SF: I notice that there are some of Tolstoy’s simplified didactic works on your reading list. Do you notice a difference in the intensity of resident response to these as compared to the more difficult works?

AK: Yes, the simple fact of the matter is that parable-like works such as “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” are easier for them to relate to right away than the more complicated ones like *Ward No. 6*. But part of my students’ task is to point out that “How Much Land?” is indeed a message-driven work, and to challenge the residents to question whether that message is correct.

SF: Slavists know that there are Dostoevsky people and Tolstoy people. Do you find the student and/or resident response to these two writers is significantly different?

AK: I have come to question that division, although I used to believe in it and cited it. It would indeed be interesting to track in a more empirical fashion whether there is some consistency in their reactions to Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. But through my observation I haven’t found any. Some students who loved the first part of *Crime and Punishment* (the one novel we read in a previous iteration of the course) did not necessarily like Dostoevsky’s “An Honest Thief.” And those who connected to “How Much Land?” were put off by *Ivan*. In order to confirm the accuracy of the Tolstoy-Dostoevsky dialectic, and whether it applies to this population, it would be essential to understand what exactly readers are responding to in each writer, and what a reader means when he or she says, “I like Tolstoy, but not Dostoevsky.” Or vice versa.

SF: How do you select what you read? Does response to a particular reading influence selection of subsequent ones? I notice that the passage in *The Brothers Karamazov* where Ivan “gives back his ticket” is not on your list. Have you considered and rejected it? Why?

AK: We did read the first part of *Crime and Punishment*, and I did not like the fact that we didn’t continue. We simply wouldn’t have had time to read the novel in its entirety, but I wanted them to have a taste of it. That discussion raised a number of fascinating topics of conversation, but it felt unfinished. I resolved after that to only read works that we can finish in their entirety. That is more satisfying for everybody. However, this summer I am beginning a Books Behind Bars reading group, which is an extension of the academic program during the academic year, and in this summer program we will spend about 7 weeks reading *Crime and Punishment* in its entirety. If that goes well, then I will move to *War and Peace*.

SF: How do you select the translation you use? Do you ever ask participants to discuss merits of different translations? Have you ever considered an exercise in which participants modify a translation into their own colloquial language?

AK: Interesting question. I don’t tamper with existing translations, although I am aware of one abridged version of *Crime and Punishment* that successfully does so. It removes chunks of “unnecessary” text and changes the city to New York and the characters’ names as well as some of the language to make them more contemporary. I thought it was well done for what it was and even considered using this version with the residents. In the end, I decided that the residents’ experience of stretching themselves beyond their literary comfort zone is more important than making their reading job easier.

As far as which translations, I choose ones that privilege readability over accuracy. I know that might sound like heresy to some. But the truth is, when dealing with such excellent translators as the Maudes, Garnett, Pevear and Volokhonsky, etc., you’re not really losing all that much in terms of accuracy—that is, the translators aren’t making whopping mistakes that change the whole sense of a scene or the work—but you *are* gaining immensely if residents aren’t so put off by a translation that they drop the book altogether. The reward far outweighs the risks in my view.

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SF: It is hard for some of us older people not to have the impending revolution in mind when we read 19th century Russian literature. Does this come up or are your students too young for this to be relevant for them?

AK: This theme doesn't come up too much, and I would like to do a better job of setting these works in their historical context. For example, both U-Va students and residents are confused when they learn, say, about Tolstoy's rejection of capitalism, because they always assumed that Russia was a feudal economy. I try to explain the subtleties, but this is something that often bogs down the conversation rather than propels it forward.

When we discuss Solzhenitsyn's "Matryona's Home," the subject of the revolution and World War II do come up, since they are specifically mentioned in the text. Many of the residents are already familiar with the Russian Revolution and the advent of socialism, even if they don't know all the details. As a result, they sense the contradiction between the socialist ideal and what Solzhenitsyn portrays as the reality of life in the Soviet Union. I help give them some context and language to develop these ideas, and in so doing, they have the chance to talk about different kinds of social systems.

When we discuss "The Overcoat," I tell them about Peter the Great's Table of Ranks, and the residents immediately connect it to the rigid bureaucratic hierarchy of the prison system in which they occupy the lowest rank. But the conversation is more of a social exploration, not a historical one.

ANNOUNCING SLD'S 16th ANNUAL GREISS LECTURE

**"Live and Learn: One Translator's
Bicultural Education"**

By Natalia Strelkova,
author of Introduction to Russian-English
Translation

At the 54th ATA Conference,
San Antonio, Texas

SF: Given that this program is being run in Virginia, you may well have some program participants who are either the descendants of slaves or of slave owners. Does this issue ever arise in connection with mention of serfdom and peasants, or are passages more focused on more universal accursed questions?

AK: I had a resident who came from a farm in Virginia, and he helped the rest of us understand the details of farming in "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" The idea of slavery has not come up, although residents are quite sensitive to how social stratification works in our country and therefore have a lot to say about this matter in all of the readings.

SF: It would seem to me difficult for believers adhering to a particular religious doctrine to consider the accursed questions without reference to this doctrine. One might assume that a significant number of the participants in your programs have this perspective. Does this come up? Does it cause problems, and how do you deal with them?

AK: Many of the residents tend to be very religious—a larger proportion of them, in fact, than my students. And while they often see connections between the ideals of the Russian greats and religious ideals, they are also usually able to separate the two concepts. Their religious upbringing is what helps them to easily recognize some of the themes about compassion and morality in the works we read, and it also causes them great distress, for these discussions make them painfully aware of the difference between how they've lived their lives and how their religion taught them to live.

On the one hand, Russian literature appears to be opening a number of wounds for these kids. But, as Dostoevsky and others understood so well, with the opening of wounds comes the possibility of healing. I think this accounts, in part, for the powerful impact Russian literature has had in helping the residents squarely face the big questions of how they've lived their lives.

From The Washington Post: July 25, 2013.
After a month camped out in a transit area of Moscow's international airport, fugitive Edward Snowden received clean clothing and a copy of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment."

Notes from an Administrative Underground

Lucy Gunderson, SLD Administrator

June is the time of year when we see our conference planning efforts come to fruition.

I am very pleased to announce that Natalia Strelkova will be our Greiss lecturer in San Antonio. I think most translators and interpreters working in the Russian and English language pair are familiar with her book, *Introduction to Russian-English Translation*, which addresses techniques translators can use to create readable English translations that do full justice to the meaning of the original Russian (see book review in the Winter 2013 *SlavFile*). Her talk is entitled "Live and Learn: One Translator's Bicultural Education." Ms. Strelkova promises to be an engaging speaker, and I am sure that her talk will spark lots of discussion among Russian into English translators.

Other SLD sessions include: "Sound Effects in Russian<>English Translation," presented by Lydia Stone and Vladimir Kovner; "The Return of False Cognates and Other Fine Points of R>E Translation," presented by Steve Shabad; "When to be 'Polite' (or Not) in User Interface Localization," presented by Larisa Zlatic; "A CAT Breed for the Slavic Soul," presented by Konstantin Lakshin; and "Translating Administrative Documents Between English and Polish," presented by Magdalena Perdek. You will be receiving a preliminary program along with the July issue of *The Chronicle*, which will contain more information on these excellent sessions.



This year division annual meetings will not be included in the regular session schedule. Our SLD meeting is scheduled for 5 pm on Friday, November 8. This meeting is the one time every year when we can come together as a group, address any concerns, and prepare for the coming year, so your attendance and ideas are vital! Please also note that we will be announcing our election results for the SLD Administrator and Assistant Administrator (see candidate statements on the following page) during this meeting. Newcomers are strongly encouraged to attend and introduce themselves at the end of the meeting.

Association-wide elections will also be held in San Antonio. As I mentioned last year, it is extremely important that all voting members take part in this election. Please read the candidate statements carefully when you receive them in the July issue of *The Chronicle*. Your votes determine the direction that our association takes!

But there's more to the conference than sessions and elections! Leadership Council member Fred Grasso has been working hard to plan our banquet. We will be holding it on Thursday, November 7 at Acenar Restaurant (<http://acenar.com/mexican/>), which is located on the River Walk and is just a short stroll from the conference hotel. See further details on page 26 of this issue. I hope everyone has a great summer!

Slavic Languages Division Statements from Candidates for Division Administrator and Assistant Administrator

On the next page you will find statements from the 2013 candidates for Division Administrator put into nomination by Nominating Committee members, Liv Bliss and Glenn Bryant. *SlavFile*'s editors wholeheartedly support these two stellar candidates. However, it is important that Division members be aware that there is an alternative to the unopposed slate elected by acclamation that is the default option. Additional candidates, who must be voting members of the Association, may be added to the ballot. Deadline for objections to the slate and/or receipt of nominations to add candidates to the slate is August 2 (45 days after publication of slate); each nomination must include a written acceptance letter and candidate statement from the candidate to be added, and sent (mail or fax) to:

Attn: Jamie Padula
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Fax: +1-703-683-6122

If the election is contested, there will be a link from the ballot to the candidate statements of alternate candidates.

**Candidate for Administrator:
Lucy Gunderson**

russophile@earthlink.net

I am honored to be asked to run again for Administrator. It has been a real pleasure for me to meet and work with SLD members over the past two years, and I am thrilled to have the chance to get to know and collaborate with even more members of the division. For those of you who may not know me, I am a Russian to English translator specializing in literature, legal and financial documents, international relations, and human rights. I have a BA in Russian from Connecticut College, an MA in Russian from the University at Albany, and a Certificate in Translation Studies from the University of Chicago. I am currently a tutor in the University of Chicago program.

Our division has achieved a great deal over the past two years. We have made it easier to communicate with our membership by creating a virtual community of Slavic translators and interpreters through our LinkedIn group and new website and blog. We have also worked with ATA HQ to explore ways to offer more opportunities for continuing education throughout the year by holding division-specific webinars, the first of which took place in late May. Needless to say, we have also devoted a great deal of time to ensuring that the SLD track offers high-quality sessions at the conference. And, of course, we have put every effort into finding excellent venues for our banquets and making newcomers feel welcome at the conference.

There is a great deal we can still achieve. In the next two years I would like to develop our website and blog to make them the place to which buyers of Slavic translations turn for professional help or advice. I would also like to hold more division-specific webinars and explore ways to incorporate an SLD Twitter feed into our social media offerings. Additionally, I will continue encouraging members working in Slavic languages other than Russian to participate in our division activities by targeting potential conference speakers, making suggestions for webinars, and starting discussions on our social media outlets. Finally, I will use my position as a member of the Divisions Committee and the PR Committee to do as much as I can to help promote the role of divisions within ATA.

I have learned so much from working with ATA HQ and the SLD Leadership Council over the past two years, and I am grateful to the Nominating Committee for giving me the opportunity to work with these wonderful groups again.



**Candidate for Assistant
Administrator: Fred Grasso**

frdgrasso@satx.rr.com

In 2004, when I was drafting and programming legal documents for a software company, a friend and ATA member encouraged me to test the freelance translation waters. I heeded my friend's sage advice, and after several years of juggling a full-time legal position with toiling as a part-time freelance translator, I went full time. My nearly life-long passion for the language prevailed over the steady paycheck, much to the consternation of my in-house "financial advisor," AKA my spouse.

For the most part, freelancing is a solitary endeavor, so the 2006 ATA conference was quite a revelation. The colleagues whose acquaintance I first made there, and whom I now call friends, have helped me to dispel that feeling of isolation, and improve and enhance my translating and editing skills. They have been instrumental in making a rigorous intellectual exercise less stressful and infinitely more rewarding.

Because the collegiality aspect is so vitally important to the division and the professional development of its members, my goals – if elected as Assistant Administrator – are to:

- maintain and enhance the current SLD collegial atmosphere;
- continue to welcome first-time conference attendees;
- promote participation in the mentoring program for Slavic language interpreters, translators, and editors entering the freelance environment; and
- encourage SLD members to contribute to the SLD blog and *SlavFile*.

Those goals are in addition to the fulfilling the Assistant Administrator's functions as enumerated by the ATA Governing Policy for Divisions.

I have over twenty years of RUS > ENG translation and transcription experience with primary specializations in oil and gas, legal, general aviation, and aerospace, in addition to a career as a military translator/transcriptionist and intelligence officer. Additional linguistic experience includes special translation training at the National Security Agency, and residence in and extensive travel throughout Russia and the former Soviet republics. I have a B.A. in Russian from Syracuse University, an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Southern California, and a J.D. from The University of Texas at Austin. I am a member of the State Bar of Texas.



Autopsy Reports in Polish and English

Presented by Magdalena Perdek

Reviewed by Katarzyna Jankowski



It is becoming a tradition for Magdalena Perdek to travel from Poland and make a presentation during the ATA annual conference. Perdek, who is an Assistant Professor of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, was ap-

proached by a colleague, an instructor for the local medical school, to help her with forensic vocabulary for an autopsy course she was teaching. This collaboration inspired Perdek to do a presentation on terminology of autopsy reports, which she gave last fall in San Diego, CA.

“Autopsy” comes from the Greek *autopsia*, meaning “to see for oneself.” In English, an autopsy is a thorough examination of a cadaver to determine or confirm the cause of death, also called a “necropsy” or “postmortem examination.” Polish uses the word *autopsja*, particularly in a popular phrase *znać coś z autopsji*, but this has nothing at all to do with a dead body. It means “to know something from one’s own experience.” While the term *autopsja* may be used in forensic medicine in Polish (*przeprowadzić autopsję* - to perform an autopsy), it also refers to a broader process consisting of examining the crime scene, pronouncing the person dead, determining the time of death and whether the death was a result of a suicide or if any third parties were involved, performing a postmortem examination, and identifying an unknown victim, if possible. The best Polish equivalent of the English “autopsy” is *sekcja zwłok* (cadaver dissection). Another formal term, *ogłędziny*, (as in *ogłędziny zewnętrzne/wewnętrzne* - internal/external examination) is also used, but watch out! An *ogłędziny* can also be performed on a living person, not necessarily a dead body. To be specific, the noun requires a modifier *pośmiertne* (*ogłędziny pośmiertne*), which then makes it a cognate of the English term “post-mortem.”

In the U.S., autopsies are performed by a coroner or medical examiner, and only the latter is required to hold an M.D. degree. The system varies from state to state: some have a centralized statewide medical examiner system, some have a county coroner system, several states have a county medical examiner system, and a number of states use a mixed county medical examiner and coroner system. In Poland, autopsies

are performed by an *obducent*, who is a medical doctor. They can also be performed by a *lekarz medycyny sądowej* (doctor of forensic medicine), who, besides being a physician, has a specialty in forensic medicine. Watch out again! An *obducent* may also be assigned to examine a live person, for example an assault or domestic violence victim, not necessarily a dead body. Another term, *medyk sądowy*, (forensic medic) is becoming outdated: it may still appear in older textbooks, but contemporary Polish does not use it anymore.

Autopsies in general are performed to determine the cause (*przyczyna*) and also the mechanism (*mechanizm*) and manner (*sposób*) of death. The cause of death is the underlying disease process or injury, which sets in motion a physiologic process that ultimately ends in death. The mechanism is the physiological or biochemical derangement that results in the death. The manner of death is how the cause came about (e.g., natural, accident, suicide, homicide, undetermined, unclassified – *naturalny, wypadek, samobójstwo, zabójstwo, nieokreślony, niesklasyfikowany*). For example, we could have a case where stab wounds were the cause and blood loss the mechanism in a homicide, or where hanging results in asphyxia in a suicidal death.

Asphyxia tends to be the most common mechanism of death, but the term is very general. Autopsy reports will further specify the form of asphyxia as follows:

- zagardlenie* – strangulation
- powieszenie* – hanging
- zadzieżgnięcie* – ligature strangulation
- zadławienie* – manual strangulation (direct compression on the neck)
- zatkanie dróg oddechowych* – smothering
- śmierć z kęsa* – choking
- śmierć w następstwie braku tlenu w otoczeniu* – environmental suffocation
- utonięcie* – drowning

Perdek also warned that translators are tempted to use the Polish term *morderstwo* for the English “homicide” or “murder.” The correct legal equivalent, however, is *zabójstwo*, which is the term used in the Polish Criminal Code, rather than *morderstwo*, which appears in the news and media announcements.

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AUTOPSY REPORTS IN POLISH AND ENGLISH

The fact that someone is not breathing and appears not to be alive is not enough to determine that the person is in fact dead. For that, physicians look for what are known as the signs of death. The proper Polish term for these is *znamiona śmierci*, not *oznaki śmierci*, and they are grouped into *znamiona niepewne* (uncertain signs, like pallor and cessation of breathing) and *znamiona pewne* (certain signs), also called *znamiona niewątpliwe*, which include lividity stains (*plamy opadowe*, *plamy pośmiertne*) and rigidity (*stężenie pośmiertne*). Descriptions in autopsy reports include a range of colors, uncommon in everyday Polish and distinguishable only by a well-trained eye. The handouts for the presentation mentioned: *miodowo-wiśniowy*, *bladoróżowy*, *bladowiśniowy* and *białoperłowy* (honey cherry, pale pink, pale cherry and white pearl).

Compilers of autopsy reports need to follow regulations and guidelines on autopsy procedures. Poland still uses an Order issued by the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs on July 15, 1929 regarding the performance of forensic and medical postmortem examinations of human bodies, supplemented by relevant regulations of the Code of Criminal Procedure, while the U.S. mostly relies on the guidelines developed by the College of American Pathologists and state laws. Report formats in the two countries require similar introductions, including information on the time and place of the autopsy, the name and age of the deceased (if known), who was present at the autopsy, and who requested that the autopsy be performed. For language and style, the guidelines suggest using clear and concise colloquial language, and avoiding terms associated with opinions rather than facts. Nevertheless, the descriptive parts of U.S. reports tend to be much longer than they are in Polish. This is because they usually include detailed information about any objects or clothes found with or on the body, which in Poland is covered in separate reports.

Perdek said that translation of autopsy reports was a challenge, because of a combination of medical and legal vocabulary. She shared with us the following list of terms she found interesting and/or difficult to translate, commenting on or explaining almost every one of them:

siniec – usually bruise, may not be the same as *siniak*

podbiegnięcie krwawe – ecchymosis, contusion (*siniak* is used commonly, while *siniec* is more of a medical term and can refer to a bruise in the deeper layers of the skin; also, some doctors would only use *podbiegnięcie krwawe* when referring to a

contusion on a dead person and *siniec* when referring to a living person)

plamy opadowe – lividity [stains] (*skąpe* and *obfite* – rich and limited, respectively)

bruzda wisielcza – ligature mark

wysklepiony – at first, the term brings to mind a dome-shaped object and makes one wonder whether it would be convex or concave, but it simply means formed/shaped; Polish synonyms: *uformowany*, *uksztaltowany*

mechanoskop – the ending “-skop” suggests that it is a device, like in *mikroskop* or *teleskop* (microscope, telescope), but it is a person: toolmark examiner, (*mechanoskopia* – the science of examining toolmarks)

grzybek piany [mushroom of froth] – froth

topielec – drowned person

skóra praczki – washerwoman skin (found on bodies recovered from water)

opinia (sądowo-lekarska) – (forensic) opinion

opiniowanie – the process of arriving at an opinion, often incorrectly rendered “opinionating” in English translation.

Perdek's experience has been that even specialist dictionaries do not cover autopsy-related terms very well. She showed how common words (e.g., *siniak*) can have a different meaning in a specialized field, while other terms (e.g., *wysklepiony*) can potentially mislead translators in their research. She admitted that in some cases, despite extensive research, the terminology would have been impossible to decipher without the expert knowledge of her colleague, the medical course instructor.

The presentation was very interesting and highlighted the difficulties that translators of autopsy reports are likely to encounter. We could also see that in a highly specialized field, when dictionaries and online resources fail, consulting a practitioner is a must. The expert's knowledge enriched the presenter's perspective, and she in turn shared her insights with us. All of us appreciated the presentation. We hope that Magdalena Perdek will continue the tradition and we will see her at the next conference.

Katarzyna Jankowski is ATA-certified English into Polish translator and WI state court-certified interpreter. She has a master's degree in English philology from Silesian University in Katowice, Poland, and a master's in public administration from Roosevelt University in Chicago. She is also a certified paralegal. First hired as in-house translator in 1993, she has been a freelance translator and court interpreter since 2003. Contact: kate.jan@att.net.

Slavic Languages Division Roundtable: *Translation versus Interpreting*

Presented by: Chair, Lynn Visson; Participants, Elena Bogdanovich-Werner, Emma Garkavi, Jennifer Guernsey, Yulia Tsaplina, and Boris Silversteyn

Reviewed by Glenn Bryant



The 53rd Annual ATA Conference in San Diego was a fascinating time for me. But it was too short, what with greeting old friends, making new ones, and attending educational sessions crammed into two days, before rushing back to the East Coast early for a family event and barely arriving home before Hurricane Sandy.

During my time there, my favorite presentation, hands down, was the SLD Round Table on Translating vs. Interpreting. Shortly after its conclusion, I called my wife and told her that I wished a broader audience could have been present for that session, because the commentary, analysis, and anecdotes served so beautifully to illustrate many of the points that non-linguists often miss, such as the differences between working into and out of your native language, the difference between knowing two languages and being able to translate between them, the differences between the spoken version of a language and the written version and, of course, the difference between translation and interpretation. This was all the more remarkable in that the speakers had presented these concepts through stories and discussions that were enlightening and entertaining for an audience containing both newcomers and experienced professionals.

Some of the panelists were almost exclusively translators or interpreters. Jennifer Guernsey, for example, is exclusively a translator (except when her Mongolian tour guide was “indisposed by excess alcohol consumption” and she had to interpret for her tour group). Yulia Tsaplina on the other hand, is primarily an interpreter, who only translates if a long-time client specifically requests it. Early in the presentation, Yulia said that one reason for this is that her degree is in conference interpretation, and “I am very hesitant to go into a field where I don’t have a degree to back me up.” At that point, someone unfamiliar with the two disciplines might have wondered whether this was some mere paper or academic distinction, but they would have learned better very quickly as the presentation unfolded.

Lynn Visson explained that in Russian, as in most Slavic languages, the difference between the written

language and the spoken language is enormous – much more significant than the similar disparity in English. “When you study languages and you compare languages, there are some languages in which there is a much bigger gap between the oral level and the written level, and I would argue that Russian is one of these, and that essentially, written Russian is a different language from spoken Russian. ... Speakers of Russian do not walk around speaking written Russian, or if they do, you immediately feel that something is very odd.” Yulia Tsaplina added that she can always tell when her interpreting booth-mate is typically a translator rather than an interpreter, because they sound so different.

In addition to the substantive differences in the content of their sources, the translator and interpreter are forced to take dramatically different approaches to their tasks. As Jen Guernsey put it, translation is orderly and predictable, whereas “of course in interpreting, you *never* know what’s coming.” Translation permits the luxury of choosing the perfect word or phrase in light of the text as a whole, whereas interpretation, unfolding in real time, does not afford such context, let alone the opportunity to research or to reflect. To use Lynn Visson’s analogy, the interpreter is a bit like a journalist, whereas the translator is more like a historian.

At the same time, there are people, like Boris Silversteyn, who appear to move seamlessly between the two worlds, and others who specialize in one but find the other to be a very useful complement. Lynn Visson, for example, primarily interprets and says, “I don’t particularly enjoy translation. I think it’s very useful. I think it’s like medicine or cod liver oil for interpreters... With the translation, it’s you and the text and you have to grapple with it.” Elena Bogdanovich-Werner, who mostly interprets but also does some translation, agreed with Lynn Visson and expanded on what she had said. Translation, unlike interpretation, provides her both the opportunity and the necessity to do research on specific words or phrases, which in turn makes later interpretation in the same subject area more successful. However, she added, the inverse can also be true. For her, translating items such as court documents or social work reports is much

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easier when she has previously interpreted for related events, which provides necessary context that informs her translation choices.

This leads to another issue that almost all of the panelists raised at one time or another. Some of the context in a professional assignment is, of course, provided by the translator or interpreter's own knowledge. All parties agreed that context and subject-area knowledge are key whether you are translating or interpreting. If you cannot both understand what you are hearing or reading and express it clearly in your target language, then no amount of knowledge of the two languages, in an abstract sense, will allow you to bridge the gap between your source and your audience.

While both disciplines absolutely demand clarity of expression in the target language, almost all interpreters work bi-directionally, while translators are more likely to translate only into their dominant language. Boris Silversteyn is an exception to the latter rule as well. He likes translating into English, although he admits this may be somewhat "audacious." He also explained how this came about. He began by translating only into Russian, but when he came to the United States, he spent one year working for JPRS. They trained him on translation into English for a year by having him type double spaced translations so that corrections could be inserted. This type of extensive practice, with professional feedback, is probably a necessary but not a sufficient precondition to accomplishing the difficult task of translation into an acquired language. Only a very small portion of candidates, for example, is able to pass the ATA certification exam into a non-native language.

Working only into your native language is a luxury that interpreters rarely have. As Boris noted, unless you are interpreting at a conference with no question-and-answer component, there is virtually no setting

where the communication is not flowing in both directions.

Emma Garkavi, however, added a slight twist to that. She acknowledged that when interpreting in court, you cannot simply say that one of your languages is passive, because you need to interpret in both directions. In a lengthy assignment, however, the interpretation format involves working in pairs, with a booth partner. It is advantageous in these cases to have one person for whom Russian is the native language, and one for whom English is the native language, and the active work can sometimes be arranged in such a way that each is primarily working into his or her native language. When the work is being done in pairs, the one who is not interpreting at the time takes notes for their mutual benefit.

For Lynn Visson, while such an arrangement is linguistically ideal, she noted that there are occasions when it is politically impractical. For example, in a diplomatic negotiation, each side typically has its own people interpreting its own remarks. This forces the interpreter into the more difficult task of interpreting out of his or her dominant language and into an acquired language. During the Soviet era, she noted, there were very few native speakers of foreign languages available to the Soviet side, and they sometimes made a virtue out of necessity by claiming that it was better to have an interpreter who understood everything being said by his or her side. Lynne's reaction, expressed during the discussion, was "... but if you can't render it properly into the other language, so what?"

One scenario that lies in between translation and interpretation is when you are interpreting and are given a prepared text in advance. Typically, you don't have enough time to translate the whole thing; in fact, you may get it only a few minutes in advance. One of the recommendations for this was not to translate the parts you know – but the parts you don't know. Others said they do not actually translate anything,



Roundtable participants from left to right: Boris Silversteyn, Emma Garkavi, Lynn Visson, Elena Bogdanovich-Werner, Yulia Tsaplina and Jennifer Guernsey

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Approximately 25 Dreams of Dagestan

Presented by Lydia Stone

Reviewed by Martha Kosir



The idea for this presentation, “Approximately 25 Dreams of Dagestan,” arose when Lydia came upon two quite different translations by Vladimir Nabokov of Lermontov’s famous poem “Сон” (“The Dream,” 1841). These translations were separated by a 17-year interval during which Nabokov’s evolving theory of poetry translation changed considerably. Lydia began to search for other English translations and eventually found 25 poetic translations written between 1891 and 2011 by such well-known translators as Walter Arndt, Anatoly Lieberman, Irina Zheleznova, Maurice Baring, and Jerome Rothenburg, as well as others by less renowned poets. During her conference presentation, Lydia focused on one of the principal issues in poetry translation -- the relative importance of preserving the text’s formal features versus of retaining semantic fidelity to the original.

Poetry translation is, of course, a challenging task with numerous factors that must be taken into account when rendering a text from one language into another. As Francis R. Jones notes, “Poetry

translators need sophisticated source-poem reading skills, to identify not only surface semantics, but also underlying imagery, idiom and allusion, plus the form and function of intrinsic-poetic and stylistic features” (Jones, p. 176). Ultimately, a poetry translation reflects the choices made by the translator with regard to formal features and semantic fidelity to the original text. Many translators prioritize one over the other, compromise and/or sacrifice form over content or even vice versa. But Lydia insists that all poetic translation of necessity involves unending compromises.

Lydia analyzed each of the translations, first sorting them into four groups on the basis of how many of the poem’s original metric and rhyme scheme features, such as the five stanzas of four lines each, completely regular iambic pentameter with regular alternation of feminine and masculine rhymes, were preserved. She noted irregularities of meter and rhyme as well

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but will underline certain parts if, for example, they know they want to translate the parts of a sentence in a different order, or if they know they will need to break up the sentence. Lynn also said that one might translate the first and last paragraphs, which would stick in people’s minds the most, although she admitted that this is “interpreter cheating.”

Emma Garkavi added that in court, judges and

lawyers often recite the same pre-written passages for many hearings and trials. She noted in passing that court may be the place where the difference between written and oral language is the smallest, because almost everything is scripted, and that preparing a translation in advance of some of these stock statements could be quite advantageous. A cautionary tale from Lynn Visson, however, illustrated one of the dangers of this approach. Once, as a diplomatic interpreter, she had heard the complaints of one side so often that she could practically recite them in her sleep.

During one session, an interpretation she had just rendered was met with stunned silence, and she heard the delegate whose question she had interpreted say, “Well, frankly, that was going to be my next question, but since the interpreter has already raised it, why don’t you answer?”

For anyone who has access to the audio files of the conference, this presentation would be well worth a listen for such stories alone.

Glenn Bryant is a Certified Translator (Rus>Eng) and an attorney. He lives in Maryland with his wife, Melissa and son, Simon.



Many audience members wanted to exchange ideas with the panel after the presentation.

DREAMS OF DAGESTAN

as violations or jarring examples of peculiar syntax or term choice. The first group included attempts to retain all formal features, including the feminine rhymes. (Lydia noted that this type of rhyme appeared to be more important, and also easier, for Russian native speakers than for their English-speaking counterparts.) The second group comprised examples of translations that retained all the formal features except for the feminine endings. The third group included examples of translations where only two rhymes appeared per stanza, with all rhymes being masculine. Finally, the fourth and last group consisted of examples of non-metric translations, which sometimes incorporated some metric features. Within the group of non-metric translations, Lydia also found an example of a free verse translation of the poem, which she thought was interesting and quite successful.

Lydia was intrigued by the frequency with which the same English rhyme occurred in the translations of multiple authors. For example, as a rendition of lines 1 and 3 of stanza 2, 11 out of the 19 translators who rhymed these lines used the rhyme *steep/sleep*. The interesting thing about this is that the Russian equivalent of the word *steep* does not occur anywhere in the original poem, although it is completely consistent with the terrain of Dagestan that Lermontov is describing. This seems to suggest that most

translators (who represented a wide range of poetic expertise) will use a logically and tonally consistent rhyme if one exists. Lydia believes the frequent existence of rhymes such as these provides evidence that there is indeed a Rhyme god.

Lydia observed that the tone of Lermontov's poem, as opposed to its subject matter, is empirical and rather dry. The poetic narrator expresses no emotion of his own and uses only two emotional adjectives грустный (sad) and весёлый (merry), both to describe aspects of what the dying man sees in his dream. Despite the dramatic nature of its subject, the Russian poem is devoid of exclamations. Moreover, it lacks metaphors and similes. Some of the translations failed, occasionally or globally, to convey this tone, most notably using "overwrought or senseless metaphors" (e.g., "her stare the shade or shroud of starless skies" or "garlands thick as pyres") evidently introduced for the sake of rhyme. Another example of what Lydia considered tone discrepancies was the use of words such as *dale* and *glen*, evocative of the pastoral English countryside, to describe the harsh landscape of Dagestan.

To assess the semantic fidelity of each translation, Lydia analyzed how many key propositions were retained in each rendition (for example, one proposition was, "the valley was in Dagestan"). She also examined

ORIGINAL: Сон, 1841 (110 words)	LITERAL TRANSLATION: Dmitri Obolensky (150 words)
В полдневный жар в долине Дагестана С свинцом в груди лежал недвижим я; Глубокая ещё дымилась рана, По капле кровь точилась моя.	In the heat of noon, in a gorge of Dagestan I lay motionless with a bullet in my breast; My deep wound was still steaming And my blood oozed out by drops.
Лежал один я на песке долины; Уступы скал теснились кругом, И солнце жгло их жёлтые вершины И жгло меня — но спал я мёртвым сном.	I lay alone on the sand of the gorge; The ledges of the cliffs clustered around, The sun was scorching their yellow summits, And scorching me, but I slept the sleep of the dead.
И снился мне сияющий огнями Вечерний пир в родимой стороне. Меж юных жен, увенчанных цветами, Шёл разговор весёлый обо мне.	And I dreamed of an evening feast, Glittering with lights, in my homeland, Young women, garlanded with flowers, Were gaily talking about me.
Но в разговор весёлый не вступая, Сидела там задумчиво одна, И в грустный сон душа её младая Бог знает чем была погружена;	But not joining in the gay conversation. One of them sat sunk in thought, And in a sad dream her young soul God knows by what (agency) was immersed.
И снилась ей долина Дагестана; Знакомый труп лежал в долине той; В его груди дымясь чернела рана, И кровь лилась хладеющей струей.	And she dreamed of a gorge in Dagestan; A familiar corpse lay in that gorge; A black wound was steaming in his breast And flowed in a stream that was growing cold

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the number of “intrusions” of images and words not in the original and evaluated how consistent they were with the poem as written. Finally, she identified a small number of somewhat subtle points she considered important to the poem, for example, the fact that the man was alive in the first stanza and dead in the last, and evaluated whether they were retained in each translation. She then compared individual translators and groups on these features. The inter-group comparisons showed that adherence to formal

features was associated with a slightly lesser degree of semantic fidelity. However, that effect was small and was dwarfed by the large variations among individual translators in each group. To entertain the audience, Lydia also prepared a humorous “worst line compendium,” some of whose howlers came from the better-known translators.

The following poems, both by accomplished poetic translators, demonstrate the effect of the priority given to formal or semantic fidelity in poetry translation.

<p>Anatoly Liberman (158 words)</p> <p>Deep in a dale, immovable and choking, I lay alone my breast by bullets ripped: At scorching noon my open wound was smoking And drop by drop my blood <u>congealed</u> and dripped.</p> <p>The dale was empty after the <u>invasion</u>, The mountains <u>stood inhospitably steep</u>, Their summits <u>cracked</u> in midday heat <u>Caucasian</u>, But I was <u>cold</u> in my <u>unbroken</u> sleep.</p> <p>I slept and dreamed that women decked with <u>roses</u> Had come together for a merry feast; They <u>drank</u> and laughed and sat in <u>languid poses</u>. They talked of me; their talking never <u>ceased</u>.</p> <p>But 'mid the guests there was a <u>silent</u> maiden. Who did not laugh and did not talk or <u>dance</u>. The table stood with rich refreshments laden, But something plunged her feelings in a <u>trance</u>.</p> <p>She dreamed of someone motionless and <u>choking</u>; A man she knew was dying in a <u>dale</u>. At scorching noon his open wound was smoking, And all his blood became <u>congealed</u> and <u>stale</u>.</p>	<p>Vladimir Nabokov, 1958 (156 words)</p> <p>In noon's heat, in a <u>dale</u> of Dagestan With lead inside my breast, <i>stirless*</i> I lay; The deep wound still smoked on; my blood ** Kept trickling drop by drop away.**</p> <p>On the* dale's sand alone I lay. The cliffs Crowded* around in ledges steep,** And the* sun scorched their tawny tops** And scorched me -- but I slept death's sleep.**</p> <p>And in a dream I saw an evening feast <i>That in my native land with bright lights shone;</i> Among young women crowned with flowers,** A merry talk concerning me went on.</p> <p>But in the merry talk not joining,** One of* them sat there lost in thought,** And in a melancholy dream** Her young soul was immersed — <u>God knows by what</u>.</p> <p>And of a <u>dale</u> in Dagestan she dreamt; In that dale lay the corpse of one she knew; Within his breast a smoking wound showed black, And blood ran in a stream <i>that colder grew</i>.</p>
<p>Comments: All metric and rhyme features of original retained; no irregularities in meter or less than perfect rhymes. No grammatical or English usage irregularities. Reproduces 38/62 propositions of the original. There are many semantic intrusions (underlined) some of which are more than minor in effect. For example, <i>silent</i>, while not overtly mentioned in the original, is clearly implied (although it makes the <i>did not talk</i> redundant); <i>dance</i> is nowhere mentioned in the original but is not inconsistent with the scene; <i>languid poses</i> is what some would consider an irrelevant interpolation clearly introduced for the sake of rhyme and meter, while the line that begins <i>The table stood...</i> creates a (possibly distracting) image not used in the original while omitting the images actually found in the corresponding line. Fails to mention Dagestan; the man is <i>dying</i> (not dead) in last stanza. Other than use of <i>dale</i>, there are no semantic lapses.</p>	<p>Comments: All the 62 propositions of the original are retained; there are no semantic intrusions unless one counts <i>dale</i>. Only two rhymes in each stanza are preserved. One somewhat inexact rhyme is used (<i>thought/what</i>). Although the majority of lines are in iambic pentameter, a quarter of them have only four stresses (marked by ** at the end of the line) and are either one or two syllables short of the number in each original line. In several instances a dactyl replaces an iambic foot (marked by * after foot) mainly in the first syllable of the line, which is generally considered acceptable in English. Minor instances of mildly awkward or archaic “poetic” syntax and one strange word are italicized above. The line-ending <i>God knows by what</i> seems to verge on exclamation and thus to be a mild tone error.</p>

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After summarizing her key observations regarding the formal and semantic features of the translations of the poem, Lydia engaged in a lively discussion with the audience on the topics of whether meter and rhyme should be preserved in translation, differences in what is permissible with regard to slight deviations in meter and rhyme in different languages, and the question of the extent to which formal fidelity justifies semantic infidelity and vice versa. Another point of discussion touched on whether it is important to maintain line for line and stanza for stanza correspondence of the translated text to the original. Finally, the question posed was whether translators should be limited to dictionary definitions of the words in the original or be guided by their overall interpretations of the general meaning of the poem. The point was also made that even in fanciful poems, the translator may benefit from research on *realia*. When perplexed by whether the wound in the poem would actually have been smoking rather than steaming, Lydia was lucky enough to contact, through a Yahoo group, Eugene Pobegalov a Russian thoracic surgeon and translator who explained all the fine points to her.

Overall, Lydia's presentation emphasized how poetry translation requires more than general translation expertise and cast light on some of the factors influencing the success of the final product. After all, translation is not a "mere movement from text A to text B" (Chesterman, p. 8) and certainly not a simple word for word transposition. The meanings created are "neither randomly bestowed by the reader, nor objectively there on the page" (Eagleton, p. 111). It is the task of the translator (as a reader and an interpreter of a text) to strive for clarity and exactness while exploring and recreating the formal and the semantic

aspects of the text. Jiří Levý, for example, maintained that, as an activity, translation is "a *decision process*" (Laiho, p. 116). This decision process has "the structure of a semiotic system with its semantic, syntactic and pragmatic aspects"; moreover, it is "decisive for choosing between fidelity and freedom" (Laiho, p. 116).

Although in poetry, form is "constitutive of content and not just a reflection of it" (Eagleton, p. 67), it nonetheless depends on the decisions (and the capability) of the translator as to the degree of compromise desirable to produce an acceptable rendition in another language. Although absolute fidelity to both form and content is highly desirable, it is virtually always unattainable, and as such it requires the translator to compromise continually.

As always, Lydia's dynamic and entertaining presentation, which illustrated the challenging task of a poetry translator, generated much interest and participation on the part of the audience. Ultimately it reminded us that the process of translation, as a matter of "interpretation and negotiation," is an exercise in which translators, as expert readers of texts, are constantly faced with difficult choices.

Martha Kosir is *Slavfile*'s poetry editor. In addition to translating poetry from Slovenian into English, she has done poetry translations from English into Spanish, from Slovenian into Spanish, and from German into Spanish and English. Her areas of special interest are the philosophy of language, foreign language pedagogy, and film studies. She works as an Associate Professor of Spanish at Gannon University, kosir001@gannon.edu.

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SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

As I write this, on June 3, we are fast approaching Pushkin's birthday, my own, and, tomorrow, that of my father, who would have been 115 had he lived. I would like to devote this column, which I probably would never have started writing if I hadn't inherited his endless fascination with words and language, his love of Russian literature and his sense of humor, to my father. I have chosen to do this in the form of a



list of quotations either from or about him, arranged in roughly chronological order. My thanks to Michael Ishenko for suggestions about the Lermontov translation and for encouraging me to write about my father after I had started talking about him.

My father, Gregory S. Razran, in the late 1950s.

A Life in Quotes

To Commemorate the 115th Anniversary of the Birth of my Father, Gregory Razran

1 Pertaining to ca. 1904: *When I was a child of only six and began attending an old-fashioned Jewish religious school, my mind was already troubled by grave questions of creation and existence. The teacher, an old rabbi in a round velvet cap, explained to us the greatness and power of God and the creation of the world in 7 days. His explanations, although not new to me, made a deep impression upon my mind. However, when he repeated the same words in the same tone for a week in succession and made me learn the Hebrew text by heart, I once became bolder and asked: "Rabbi, rabbi, who created God?" "Do not be a fool," was the stern, angry answer, and all the children burst out in loud laughter. Copied verbatim from the beginning of a 1924 essay in ESL class, entitled "How I Became an Atheist," which he kept and I inherited.*

2 Pertaining to ca. 1910-1912: *From a collection of reminiscences about the town of Slutsk. But he [a rabbi] never managed, however, to detect the "prohibited" books which I avidly read in the Yeshivah outhouse. It is there in the outhouse where, believe it or not, my first serious secular education began.*

3 Sometime before 1924: *I have ridden a damsel. As reported by my mother, the result of an overzealous attempt by my father to complete an English assignment in which he was asked to provide analogs of a sentence about a damsel riding through a forest in all possible English tenses.*

4 Ca. 1932: *I need a book you have taken out of the library and since I am a professor and you are a student you must give it to me. I will come to your apartment this evening and get it. As reported by my mother—how my father initiated an acquaintance with her.*

5 Pertaining approximately to the year 1934: *Your father was very persistent. My mother's (ca. 1979) response to my question of why she had married my father rather than another psychologist who had been pursuing her.*

6 1934. *"The Dialectics of Diarrhea":* A sign hung out a Moscow dormitory window by Columbia students participating in a pilot USSR-US student exchange. My father was supposed to be in charge of them but was unable to maintain sufficient control, being intimidated by these scions of old, powerful American families (including, I believe, a member of Theodore Roosevelt's family). Needless to say, the exchange was discontinued after that.

7 Pertaining to 1941 (written years later for a collection of papers about the town of Slutsk): *It was a hot day, June 30, 1941. My wife and I and two friends had left New York a few days before on an automobile trip to Mexico. Hitler had invaded Russia, and the day before the war was raging, according to the communique we read in a newspaper bought in Nashville, Tennessee, in the direction of Baranovich and Luck (Lutzk). We had been motoring all day and stopped late in the evening, strangely, in a city named Palestine in the state of Texas. We had seen no newspaper all day and could find none in Palestine. The next day, however, we bought a New York Times in San Antonio, Texas, and there I read that "the battle is now in the direction of Bobruisk and Borisov." Slutsk was obviously already in Hitler's inferno. Later, I heard that the remainder of my family in Chaplitsy near Slutsk was drowned in the Polesie River trying to escape. I heard no more.*

8 Ca. 1947-1952: *Once upon a time, there was a beautiful princess named Catherine who was almost as smart as you are. She wanted to do many things to help her country, but they had given her for a husband a stupid prince who only wanted to play with toy soldiers. What I frequently heard when requesting a bedtime story.*

9 Somewhere in the 1950s: A discussion of the appropriate plural of the word *blintz*, with references to different languages, sent in a letter to a morning husband-wife radio talk show (possibly *Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick*) and read over the air. I regret not having kept a copy.

10 Ca. 1950-1960 (dinner-table dialogue): My father: *I heard a good story today in the faculty cafeteria, but it is a little off-color. Probably I should not tell it in front of Lydia. My mother: Probably not. My father: I will tell it.*

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11 Ca. 1950-1964: *He's a poor man, your majesty.* A quote from an *Alice in Wonderland* record I had as a child, said in response to my frugal mother's attempts to keep my father from over tipping.

12 1951: *"For shame. You can stone me, I am a Jew, but you cannot stone him, he is a gentile come to help your country."* Reported outraged admonition of a group of Orthodox boys in Jerusalem who were throwing stones at my father and another American professor for the sin of wearing shorts on the Sabbath. They had both come over to help set up the Hebrew University after Israel's independence.

13 Ca. 1956-1959: *"If you love literature, you had better start learning to read Russian."* Said to me in an obvious context.

14 Ca. 1956-1964: *"Kitty on the ice."* Said with a dreamy, romantic expression on his face when talking about great moments of literature.

15 Ca. 1958: *To the railroad station to get something to eat.* A reply to my mother when she had asked him where he was going. This caused her some distress about his mental health, since he had just eaten and there was no railroad station anywhere around. Having noticed that the day was Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of fasting and atonement, he had recalled his years in the *mestechko*, where the only place he and his apostate friends could get a bite to eat on that day was the government-run railroad station. He was actually going out to mail a letter or something equally prosaic.

16 1958-1960: *You've got to make sure.* Said during the years I was travelling with him, to accompany obsessive repeated checking of tickets, passports and other documents. It only occurred to me later that what I disdained as neurotic behavior was probably the result of getting his family out of Russia in 1919 (the hardships of which he never talked about).

17 Throughout my childhood: *You'll find out.* More warning than threat, addressed to me and my American habit of refusing to do everything in my power to avert all possible impending dangers and disasters.

18 1959: *a table of seven different transliterations of Russian--Gregory Razran.* Example of usage in the "Transliteration" entry of *Webster's Third Unabridged Dictionary* (original copyright 1961). Discovered by my stepson while browsing, sometime in the 1980s, evidently from a 1959 article in *Science*. My father never knew he had been quoted in an English dictionary or he would have told me. Lover of words that he was, he would have been so pleased.

19 1961 or 63: *Гриша, сто лет не виделись.* (Grisha, it's been 100 years since we last saw each other.) Spoken by a man who rushed to embrace to my father when he was out for an early morning walk on Red Square. This fellow insisted the two of them had worked together and been buddies at a factory, and finally



My parents, Gregory and Elna Razran, some time in the 1930s.

stalked off, concluding that my dad had some political reason for denying his own identity. This was evidently just a coincidence of similar appearance and identical name, but it scared the wits out of my father during a period when he was travelling to Russia frequently, and many Americans were encountering scary politically motivated incidents.

20 Summer 1962: *It gave a little kick.* My father's translation of virtually every past-tense verb of motion that I did not understand, during the summer we spent evenings translating Chekhov so that I could skip a year of Russian and go straight into literature seminars.

21 1971: *All moving toward their own truths/Each bravely in his own path/Worms crawling lowly ruts/Men charting parabolas.* From Voznesensky's "Parabolic Ballad." My father used this as the epigraph for his book *Mind in Evolution*, which was devoted to how learning changes as species become more complex.

22 September 1973: *When I get back from the beach, I am going to organize all these keys we have lying around the house.* The last words my father ever spoke to my mother before he drowned.

23 1973: *Gregory reads 17 languages, but he only writes one, and whatever he says, it's Russian.* Quoted at my father's memorial service by one of his colleagues, the comment of another colleague who had just edited a manuscript purportedly in English.

24 1978: *Knowledge is easy to a man of understanding* (Proverbs 14:6). The biblical epigraph to my dissertation in psychology, which I added to honor my late father's tradition of always starting a presentation or article with a biblical quote.

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JOURNAL ASKS FOR TRANSLATED SLAVIC POETRY SUBMISSIONS

Followers of this column may be interested in the following ad, which we publish as a service to our readers.

The International Poetry Review is accepting submissions for its winter 2013 issue, which will be a special issue on translations of contemporary (post-1950) Slavic and East European poetry, to appear in spring 2014. It will be guest-edited by Kathleen MacFie and Sarah Krive. Contemporary translation is the *Review's* primary focus (presented in bilingual format), along with a limited section, in every issue, of poetry originally written in English. We look for translations from the work of contemporary poets, without adhering rigidly to any one school of translation theory. We do request that the translator be responsible for securing translation and publication rights as necessary.

For this special issue, only work received between August 1, 2013 and March 15, 2014 will be considered for publication. We prefer submissions of 3-5 poems, but individual poem submissions are acceptable. Please provide the original Slavic/East

European-language text as well as the translation. We require fonts compatible with Microsoft Word for the Macintosh. Translations should not have appeared anywhere else, including in self-published chapbooks or on Internet sites. Individuals will be informed of decisions to publish starting in November and continuing on a rolling basis through March.

We prefer to receive submissions via email, preferably as Word attachments, which should be sent to both guest editors:

kathleen_macfie@uncg.edu, sakrive@uncg.edu.

We strongly recommend that prospective contributors first read the magazine. For a sample copy, please send \$6 (checks should be made out to International Poetry Review) to the following address:

International Poetry Review
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
2336 MHRA Bldg. PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

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And one more thing in his honor, my translation of the words to a song I can still hear him singing (off-key).

Happy Birthday, Papa!

Выхожу один я на дорогу;
Сквозь туман кремнистый путь блестит;
Ночь тиха. Пустыня внемлет богу,
И звезда с звездою говорит.

В небесах торжественно и чудно!
Спит земля в сияньи голубом...
Что же мне так больно и так трудно?
Жду ль чего? жалею ли о чём?

Уж не жду от жизни ничего я,
И не жаль мне прошлого ничуть;
Я ищу свободы и покоя!
Я б хотел забыться и заснуть!

Но не тем холодным сном могилы...
Я б желал навеки так заснуть,
Чтоб в груди дремали жизни силы,
Чтоб дыша вздымалась тихо грудь;

Чтоб всю ночь, весь день мой слух лелея,
Про любовь мне сладкий голос пел,
Надо мной чтоб вечно зеленея
Тёмный дуб склонялся и шумел.
(M.Yu. Lermontov, 1841)

I go out alone upon the highroad;
Through the fog the flinty roadbed shines;
Night is still. Earth, heeding God, looks skyward
And the stars commune with their own kind.

All's majestic, solemn up above me!
Earth now sleeps immersed in shining blue.
Why, my life, am I so weary of thee?
Hopes unmet? Or past deeds that I rue?

From this life I've no more expectations
And my past engenders no regrets.
Freedom, peace—my only aspirations.
Just to sleep, to sleep and to forget!

Yet, life's thread I'd not completely sever.
Not for me the graveyard's chill repose.
Life force dimmed, I yearn to sleep forever
Chest still rising gently as I doze.

Night and day may voices serenade me,
Singing sweetly, softly about love.
May a tall green oak tree bend to shade me,
Shelter me with rustling leaves above.

Вы, Иван, и ты, Иваныч!

Michael Ishenko



The topic I venture to discuss here is so wide-ranging, so culturally intricate, and so intimately Russian that it is hard to know where to begin.

As a student of English, I read

Henry Fowler's famous style guide, and I remember the 20 or so pages he dedicated to explaining the use of *shall* and *will*. I was particularly struck by this statement: "It is unfortunate that the idiomatic use, while it comes by nature to southern Englishmen..., is so complicated that those who are not to the manner born can hardly acquire it."¹ Many years later, I must admit that I too have come to believe that languages indeed feature certain subtleties, mostly of a cultural rather than a purely linguistic or idiomatic nature, that may appear virtually ungraspable to those "who are not to the manner born." This contention can be exemplified, among other things, by the use of *ты* vs. *вы* (*thou* vs. *you*)² and the mind-blowing variety of derivative forms of given names and patronymics in contemporary Russian.

ТЫ VS. ВЫ

As far as I know, the standard information taught to English-speaking students of Russian in connection with the distinction between *ты* and *вы* is that *ты* is used among friends and relatives, while *вы* is used when talking to older people or in more formal situations. *Ты* is also used among children, who are addressed in this way by adults; however, children are supposed to say *вы* to adults. Family members normally say *ты* to one another. Young adults may start with the more formal *вы*, but are likely to transition to *ты* before too long, as relations between them tend to become informal more quickly. Older people tend to say *ты* to closer acquaintances or to use it by mutual agreement on a reciprocal basis. Between the sexes, a transition to *ты* may signal flirtatiousness or amorous feelings. If you are on a first-name basis with someone, you are more likely to say *ты* to this person; however, you may also say *вы*. If you use the more formal first-name-plus-patronymic form of address, you are supposed to use *вы*.³ That's about it, I guess. Or is it?

Let me offer for your consideration a few examples from my personal experiences. I hope they will give you a better sense of how these things actually work in real life and serve as a helpful supplement to those

of you who have acquired your knowledge of Russian academically.

I have two Russian friends and colleagues who are both about as old as I am. My interactions with each of them are pretty similar — work-related, sometimes social. Why do I say *ты* to one of them and *вы* to the other? (I don't think I can answer this question without seeing an analyst.)

I say *вы* to an ex-neighbor and a friend of mine who is about 16 or 17 years my senior, even though I address him by his first name only and oftentimes even use a diminutive derivative form of his given name. I also have younger Russian friends, a husband and wife, both about five years my junior and, accordingly, about 21 or 22 years younger than my ex-neighbor. They maintain the same level of relations with him as I do. Yet, for some mysterious reason, they say *ты* to him.

I know another Russian couple here in the Bay Area, both young enough to be my children. I say *вы* to the wife and *ты* to the husband. Why? I have no idea. I could certainly analyze what might be my reasons for doing so, but then again, any rationale to the contrary might be equally valid.

My father, who was born and brought up in a small rural community in Eastern Ukraine, said *вы* to his father and to his mother. A city boy, I said *ты* to both of them. At least this is something I think I can explain: saying *вы* to a parent was common in village and rural communities, but not in big cities. I think it may be comparable to a child calling his father "sir" in the rural American culture of the same period.

I say *вы* to my mother-in-law and call her by first name and patronymic, even though we have been very close friends for many years.

In the old country, my superiors at work called me *Михаил Тарасович* (Mikhail Tarasovich), yet said *ты* to me most of the time. Was it because I was young? Perhaps — but I also heard them address much older coworkers in a similar fashion. So how does that fall under the general rule I mentioned above?

When my son was about eight or nine years old, two of my old college classmates and cronies always addressed him as *вы*, to his sheer delight. They also said *вы* to me and my wife, another classmate, because that had been a kind of a game, a playful

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mannerism, back in our university days. Speaking of my college days, our professors invariably said *вы* to us. This was a distinct kind of *вы* that we used to describe as “the university *вы*.” In 2010, when we visited an old professor of ours (she had just turned 83), she continued to say *вы* to me and to my wife, but did slip in an occasional *ты* now and then. Somehow, these “slips of the tongue” made us feel particularly warm for some reason, as they seemed to remove the last screens of formality from our relationship.

Вы vs. you

Russian children normally begin to distinguish between *ты* and *вы* (at least my son did), and are taught the difference between them, at a relatively early age — between three and four, I would say. A couple of months after he was born, I decided I had to teach him English. After all, I had taught English to dozens of students, so why not to my own son? On the other hand, I had seen quite a few examples of how hard it was for professional teachers to teach a “subject” to their own child, so I made a really big decision that may without exaggeration be called “life changing.” I decided I was going to speak English with him at all times. That, I believed, was the only surefire way to teach a foreign language. Jumping ahead of myself, I can tell you this: it worked. We still speak English only, and he is 35 now. He was 13 when we moved to San Francisco, at which point my wife (who has always represented the Russian-speaking half of our family, even though she knew English very well when our son was born) suggested that my son and I could finally “go back” to Russian. The problem was, he and I didn’t have anything to go back to. He had heard me speaking English almost from day one. So he and I both thought a little, in silence, trying to imagine what it would feel like to share a “foreign” language, Russian — and gave up the idea entirely without even taking a crack at it. I guess we were just not mentally prepared to speak Russian to each other.

To be completely honest, however, there was a point in our relationship where we did end up with bilingual dialogue. Again, I think he was three or four years old when it happened. As he began to leave the confines of his immediate family circle and felt the pressure of the prevalent language, Russian, he subconsciously gave preference to it. As a result, I continued speaking strictly English to him, but all his responses came in Russian. I realized then that we had reached a critical point that would determine if my experiment would become a success or a failure. So I took a drastic measure.

One day, when he answered me in Russian again, I told him I didn’t understand. He suspected I wasn’t exactly telling the truth (after all, my wife and I continued speaking Russian between ourselves), so he got angry. He clenched his fists. He stamped his foot. He continued speaking Russian. But I was adamant.

Well, I was older and stronger, of course. He did put up a fierce resistance, though. He didn’t speak to me for three days. On the fourth, he relented. He has never tried speaking Russian to me again.

By the way, at that time he didn’t even know the *names* of the languages he spoke. My wife said something to him in English one day, but he felt annoyed for some reason and said to her, “*He говори со мной как папа!*” (Don’t speak to me like daddy!) It was remarkable how easily he switched between the two languages. (I must note that phonetically he displayed much better results in English than in Russian, as he stopped mispronouncing English words, as very young children do, long before he stopped mangling their Russian counterparts. I believe it must be because English words, especially the most frequently used ones, are significantly shorter than Russian words of the same class, and English also features more vowels than Russian, due in no small part to the diphthongs that Russian lacks completely.) I remember him sitting at his play-table one day and drawing, his back to the door to the room. I was sitting behind him reading a book. As is common with little children, he was talking to himself as he drew — perhaps adding a story to his pictures. He must have felt my presence because he spoke English. Then a change of backdrop occurred as my wife entered the room and I left for the kitchen. He never looked around — but he switched to Russian in mid-sentence.

I am telling you all this just as the background for a little story that I wanted to offer as an illustration of how Russian children learn the difference between *ты* and *вы*. My son had just done so and, like every young child of his age, he was very proud of his newly acquired knowledge and showed it off whenever the opportunity presented itself. He and I had to take a bus ride one day and, as custom dictated, I carried him in my arms as we boarded the bus through the front door — a privilege enjoyed by “*инвалиды и пассажиры с детьми*” (disabled persons and passengers with children) according to public transit rules. The bus was overcrowded, and an elderly woman sitting in one of the front seats offered to take my son so that I didn’t have to stand in the crowd on a moving bus with a little boy in my arms — another custom

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we had in the old country. I handed him over to her and, having seated himself comfortably in her lap, he struck up a conversation, deliberately choosing the subject so that he could boast of his new social skills. I remember him saying something like, “А у вас тоже есть сыночек?” (Do *you* have a little son, too?), with a very strong emphasis on *вас*. She said she did, but her son was much older than he. He went on asking her more and more questions, all stressing *вы* in one form or another, but to his disappointment she seemed to take no notice of it and never complimented him on his sociolinguistic mastery. At last, he reached a point where he couldn’t wait any longer to be praised, so he made a very straightforward statement: “А я всегда говорю взрослым *вы*!” (I always say *вы* to adults). She got the message at last and said, “Молодец. Но с мамой и с папой ты, наверное, на ты?” (Good boy. But you probably say *ты* to your mother and father?) To which he replied, “С мамой я на ты, а с папой на you.” (I say *ты* to my mother, but I say *you* to my father.) I will never forget the big question mark in that woman’s eyes.

First names and their spawn

In 1987, a classmate of mine published his first novel, *Полоса препятствий* (*The Obstacle Course*), in which he described the two very memorable summer months that our male students spent in a basic training camp in the early 1970s before we were ultimately commissioned as lieutenants in the Soviet infantry reserve corps. For three years in a row, we had had a full day of military training weekly, which culminated in that final two-month field exercise in the middle of the scorched, desert-like steppe of Bessarabia. As required by army regulations, our commanding officers addressed us as *товарищ курсант* (“comrade cadet”) and were strictly on a *вы* basis with

us. There were exceptions, however:

— Юра, — повторил майор. — Будь человеком.

В знойном военизированном воздухе, пропитанном духом придуманной опасности и вполне реальной субординации, обращение по имени в устах майора звучало дико и ласково.

(“Yura,” the major said again. “Have a heart. Please.”

In the scorching, paramilitary air, permeated with the feeling of make-believe danger and down-to-earth subordination, coming from the major, this use of a first name was at once off-putting and touching.)⁴

Юра, of course, is a short form of *Юрий* which, along with *Егор* (Yegor), is a form of the official Christian name *Георгий* (Georgiy). *Юрий*, *Егор*, and *Георгий* became legally different names only after the Russian Revolution of 1917. In fact, I had a friend whose official (“passport”) name was *Георгий*, but his friends called him *Юрик*.

Unlike English, Russian offers an astonishing variety of derivative forms of given names, each suggesting specific shades of meaning or style. It appears that every short form, in turn, “splits” further into multiple diminutive, affectionate, or pejorative forms, each carrying additional connotations. Let’s take a closer look at just one of the first names — my own.

I am not even sure I have exhausted all the existing forms — the ones listed in the box below were just the first that came to mind. In addition, there are also “foreign-style” derivatives that occur occasionally in some contexts; for example, when I visited Georgia (the ex-Soviet republic), my friends there would sometimes call me *Мухó* or *Мишико́*. *Майкл*, *Михаэль*, *Мигель*, *Микеле*, *Михал*, *Мишель*, and *Микаэль* all fall under the same “local-color” category and may be used in a variety of contexts, sometimes facetiously or jokingly, sometimes informally or casually, and so on.

Full given name: Михаил		
Derivative forms:	Subderivative form(s):	Notes on stylistic function and/or specific use
Миша	→ Мишка	Most common, neutral short form
	→ Мишенька, Мишаня, Мишанечка, Мишуня, Мишута, Мишутка, Мишуточка, Мишата, Мишуля, Мишук, Мишука, Мишара	Very common casual form; may be used pejoratively in certain contexts
Миха	→ Михай, Михася, Михаля, Миханя, Михасик	Affectionate, diminutive; context-specific or relation-specific
Михайло	→ Михаилушка, Михайлушка	Casual and/or folksy
Миня	→ Минька, Миняй	Folksy (Мухайло); affectionate and folksy (the rest)
	→ Минечка, Миняша, Минюша, Минюшечка	Casual and/or folksy; playful or taunting
Мика	→ Мики	Affectionate and folksy
		Somewhat pretentious or affected

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Here is what British translator Avril Pyman writes about translation of Russian given names:

Даже если вбить себе в голову, что, скажем, *Митя* — обычное сокращение Дмитрия, как же иностранному читателю почувствовать, что *Митенька* звучит более фамильярно, *Митюха* — слегка пренебрежительно, а *Митюша* скорее нежно, тогда как *Митюшенька* просто тает на языке... <...> В своем переводе я сохранила уменьшительные только там, где они применяются не столько как ласкательные, сколько просто так, по привычке. Таким образом, Катя осталась Катей, Фенечка — Фенечкой, но из Аркаши в устах Николая Петровича вышел «Аркадий, мой дорогой мальчик» («Arkady, my dear boy»), а из Енюши в материнском приветствии Арины Васильевны — «Евгений, мой маленький» («Yevgeny, my little one»), из Енюшеньки — «my little Yevgeny love».

(Even if you get it into your head that, say, *Mitya* is a common short form of the first name Dmitry, how can a foreign reader get the sense that *Miten'ka* sounds more informal; *Mityukha*, somewhat pejorative; *Mityusha*, rather tender, while *Mityushen'ka* just melts on your tongue... <...> In my translation, I retained the diminutive name forms only where they were used simply out of habit rather than as affectionate forms. As a result, *Katya* and *Fenechka* remained *Katya* and *Fenechka*; *Arkasha*, however, became “Arkadiy, my dear boy,” when spoken by Nikolay Petrovich; *Yenyusha* became “Yevgeny, my little one,” when he was addressed by his mother, Arina Vasilyevna, while *Yenyushen'ka* turned into “my little Yevgeny love.”⁵

Patronymics

Shortly after we moved to San Francisco, I ran into our family doctor from the old country, who had emigrated a couple of years earlier. I saw her from behind and called, “Inna Mikhailovna?” She turned around and said, with tears in her eyes, “Мишенька, дорогой, хоть ты меня по имени-отчеству называешь! А то здесь меня все как собаку зовут: Инна, Инна.» (“At least you call me by my first name and patronymic. Everyone else here calls me just Inna, as if I were some kind of dog.”) A somewhat extreme example of a cultural gap, but true to the last syllable. I hope it also gives the reader an idea of how sensitive older Russian people could be to this form of address.

A French friend who speaks the best Russian I have ever heard from a non-native Russian speaker once told me how hard it had been for her to pronounce Russian given names and patronymics until she

discovered that Russians practically never enunciated them in full and tended to reduce them to short, easily pronounceable forms like *Сан Саныч*, *Ксан Ксаныч*, or *Алексан Алексаныч* for *Александр Александрович* (just try to pronounce the full form out loud by articulating every vowel and consonant and you will know exactly what I mean); *Пал Палыч* for *Павел Павлович*; *Анна Ванна* for *Анна Ивановна*, and so on. It should be kept in mind, however, that these shortened pronunciations carry a certain element of casualness and are not recommended for use in very formal circumstances. For example, a government minister should be addressed as a fully enunciated *Александр Павлович*, while your next-door neighbor could easily be cut down to *Ксан Палыч*. Or just *Палыч*, for that matter — if you feel you can risk this degree of familiarity. Calling someone by patronymic alone, often used in a reduced form, has a very special semantic overtone — that of friendliness and ease, which sometimes even border on flippancy and frivolity. Perhaps this is why patronymics are almost always contracted, if possible, when used as stand-alone forms of address. But, as with the use of slang, the use of the patronymic alone requires extra care on the part of a non-native speaker of Russian. From my own practice, I would say that I tend to use the patronymic-alone form of address when I speak to older people, mostly men, or whenever I want to sound light-hearted, somewhat facetious, and always very friendly and casual. This suggestion of friendliness and familiarity was used in Soviet propaganda, which referred to Lenin as *Ильич* (Ilyich) in certain contexts, especially when the audience included young children and adolescents.

Last but not least: **вы** vs. **Вы**

This final section is intended mostly for my native-Russian colleagues to serve as a reminder of the basic difference in usage between the capitalized *Вы* (the so-called “polite” or “respectful” form) and the uncapitalized *вы*. Over the past 10 to 15 years, I have observed a tendency to use the capitalized form in practically all contexts, so I would like to revisit here the rules that I was taught in school. I am aware that it was a very long time ago and grammar and spelling rules may change over time, but I have been focusing on my native Russian all my life, as a language professional, and I haven’t been made aware of any “official” changes to these particular rules, other than in practical use, where, by and large, the change appears to be endorsed by younger translators or writers of Russian,

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MORE THAN WORDS

who tend to borrow freely from foreign-language sources. Many English punctuation and orthography rules are absolutely inapplicable to Russian, yet many into-Russian translators apply them in their translations. Most copy-editors and proofreaders also tend to ignore these “trifles.” Yet, even though these nuances seem to make no difference in direct meaning, they do matter in terms of culture and tradition, and everyone writing in Russian should be aware of that.

The rules are quite simple:

1. Use the capitalized *Вы*, as a form of respect, when addressing a single individual or entity. For example, in business letters: *Прошу Вас...; Сообщаем Вам...*
2. Use the uncapitalized *вы* when addressing more than one individual or entity or an indefinite number of individuals or entities: *Уважаемые Мария Ивановна и Юрий Петрович, сообщаем вам...* The same “indefinite number” rule applies to questionnaires and surveys addressed to large groups of people.⁶

It is rule number two that seems to be abused quite often. The capitalized *Вы* form appears to be used indiscriminately in all contexts, including questionnaires and surveys. Even reputable websites like Gramota.ru offer contradictory information on the subject. The Gramota.ru page dealing with the capitalized-vs.-uncapitalized use of *вы* (www.gramota.ru/spravka/letters/?rub=rubric_88) cites recommendations from various dictionaries and style manuals, first D. E. Rozental’s classic style book devoted to capitalization, «Прописная или строчная» (Moscow, 2005)⁷, which states that “when addressing several persons or an indefinite group of persons, these words should be uncapitalized.” But this is followed by another source, equally reputable,⁸ which tells us that “these pronouns should also be

capitalized when used in questionnaires,” in an obvious contradiction with the “Rozental rule.” I think this contradiction probably reflects a state of transition in current Russian writing practices. But when in doubt, I believe preference should be given to the more conservative rules.

Michael Ishenko translates from English into Russian, from Russian into English, and from Ukrainian into English. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and can be reached at ishenko@aol.com.

1. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, *The King’s English*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1922, p. 133.
2. I use the forms *thou* vs. *you* here to reflect the division between the Russian *ты* and *вы*. In doing so, I follow a precedent set by E. Hemingway who used *thou* vs. *you* to reflect the Spanish pronouns *tú* (familiar) and *usted* (formal) in his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.
3. You can also read what a British teacher who works in Russia has to say on this subject at www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/russian/foreignersinrussia/2012/05/post-93.html. Some comments added to this article by Russian readers also are noteworthy.
4. Сергей Рядченко, Полоса препятствий. — Москва, Советский писатель, 1987, с. 8–9.
5. Quoted from the Wikipedia article at http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Русское_личное_имя, which makes a reference to А. Паймен, Как я переводила Тургенева на английский. Мастерство перевода. — Москва, 1965. This quotation deals in part with the author’s translation of I. S. Turgenev’s novel, *Fathers and Sons*. I was unable to locate Pyman’s original English text (if indeed it was ever written in English), so I had to do my own translation into English. The cited Wikipedia article also would be of interest to those who would like to take a closer look at the subject of Russian personal names.
6. See, for example, Д. Э. Розенталь, М. А. Теленкова, Словарь трудностей русского языка, Москва, «Русский язык», 1984 (D. E. Rozental, M. A. Telenkova, *A Dictionary of Russian Linguistic Difficulties*, Moscow, Russky Yazyk, 1984).
7. Д. Э. Розенталь, Справочник по русскому языку. Прописная или строчная? — 7-е изд., перераб. и доп. Москва, 2005, с. 302.
8. Оформление документов. Методические рекомендации на основе ГОСТ Р 6.30–97. Москва, 1998, с. 91 (Drafting Documents: Guidelines Based on Standard GOST R 6.30–97. Moscow, 1998, p. 91).



The very erudite professor E. Wayles Browne wrote to provide additional information concerning the poem quoted and translated from Vladimir Gilyarovsky’s *Moscow and the Muscovites* in the *Lite* column of our spring 2013 issue. The original poem refers to Filippov, the baker who turned cockroaches into raisins, as *Тьмутараканский князь*, which, based on the assumed morphology of the first word, Lydia translated literally as *Cockroach-swarm prince* in a literal rendering (the term was sidestepped in her poetic translation).

Dr. Browne writes: “I wanted to tell you that there’s more to the cockroach poem. It uses the adjective *t’mutarakanskij*. Look up *Taman’* in English and Russian Wikipedia. You will find that the place was called *Tmutarakan’* (variant spelling: *T’mutarakan’*) in Old Rus’ times, and it really had a *knjaz’*. The association with cockroaches presumably wasn’t there back then, since *tarakan* doesn’t show up in written sources till centuries later.”

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)

Lakeside, Arizona

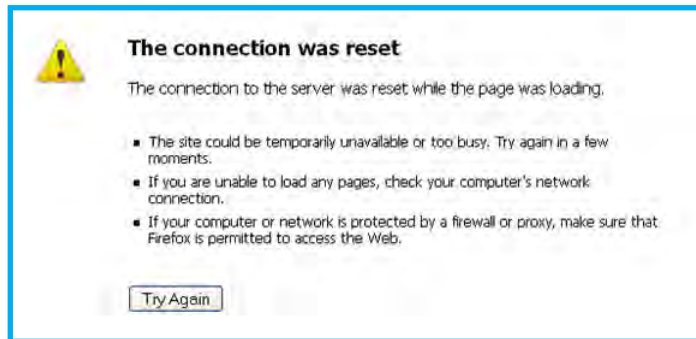


Out of night comes day, out of day comes light...

Matisyahu, "King Without a Crown"

Some time ago, we were talking about how to investigate balky websites, and, in the aftermath of the recent service disruptions at Yahoo, Twitter, and lots of other places, I thought this might be a good time to revisit the topic.

When a website refuses to load, the first thing I do is open another tab and see if some key mega-site, such as Google or Yandex, will load. If it will, the problem is likely not on my side but with the website in question. But still like to check on that website, just to be double-sure that the problem really isn't something I should be talking to my ISP about.



Previously, I suggested using www.websitenotworking.com, but not long ago that site apparently tried to drop a Kryptik Trojan onto my system, which would have put a huge crimp in my day (thank you, ESET virus scanner!). I don't know if all is well there now; I haven't had the nerve to try. Although Yandex isn't reporting websitenotworking as a dangerous site, I'm not sure even that boosts my confidence.

But there are plenty of other places that do the same thing. Stay with me.

The way it works, basically, is that the investigating site "pings" the questionable site and, after a few seconds, comes back with a positive or negative report

based on whether or not the site responded to the ping. This is not, of course, foolproof—I have received good reports on a site that was so down, it wasn't funny—but it is a start.

Here are some sites other than websitenotworking that also provide this service. All you do in each case is enter the URL of the website you're querying into a very obvious box, then click the appropriate button or hotlink.

➤ www.websitedown.info

This one, toward the bottom of its landing page, provides a list of similar sites. Now, there's camaraderie for you!

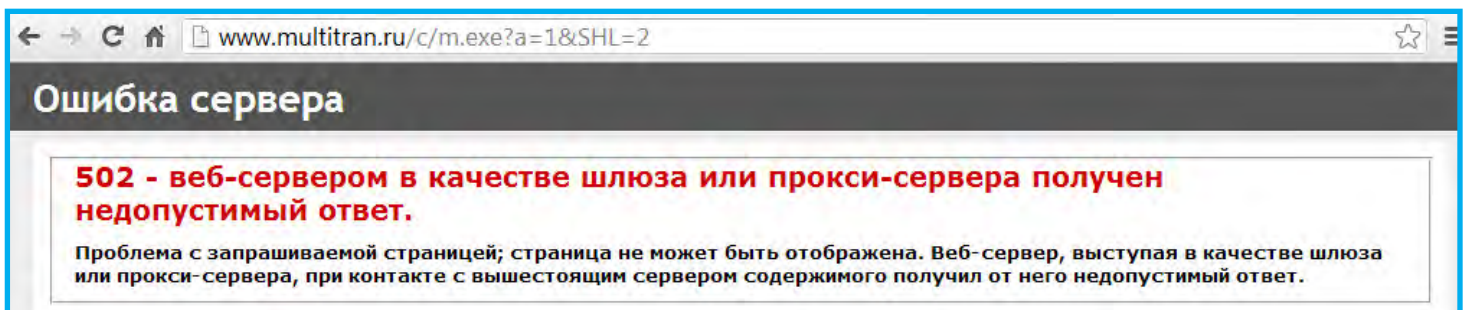
➤ www.downforeveryoneorjustme.com
www.isup.me

This one has a sense of humor. If you severely mistype the queried URL, it responds with "Huh? xxx doesn't look like a site on the interwho."

➤ www.isitdownrightnow.com
www.iidrn.com

This one also has a lengthy list of "top websites" that it checks regularly and automatically, which could be useful if you suspect an extensive disruption. The list goes away after you make a query, though. But after the query, you will be able to see a status history on your queried website; there is also a space for you to comment on your own experience with it.

- www.downtime.com has a list of top sites, like iidrn.
- www.downtime.com just seems to keep tabs on certain major sites ("your favorite web services"). This may not be particularly useful, since iidrn and downtime do the same thing but also allow you to check other sites that you're interested in, which downtime doesn't.



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And so on and so forth. Happy pinging!

Still speaking of balky websites: Multitran. Everyone who doesn't have a paid Multitran subscription and is therefore dependent on the free online version will have sad stories galore about it going down at a crucial moment.

This might help:

- If Multitran is returning a CGI error (Common Gateway Interface: don't ask me!), try to get in using <http://89.108.112.68>
- If your browser is telling you that it can't find the Multitran server at all, try <http://alk.pp.ru:8080/c/m.exe?a=1>

On a good day, these will get you through a "back door" into the site. I have no idea how they work or why the first seems to be ineffective in the absence of a CGI error (or maybe it doesn't work at all any more—I haven't had a CGI error in ages, so can't test it). When you do get in, you won't be logged in as yourself, but I would call that a small price to pay until Multitran is feeling better again.

(And if you do happen to be using Multitran's free version, consider paying it back a little by adding entries and/or commenting on incorrect entries from time to time. Karma: it's a wonderful thing...)

Finally, and rather off-topic but still in a dark place, there has been a flurry of recent activity in various online translator forums concerning a famous scammer called Isabel Benson who surfaces now and again and is apparently uncatchable. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough: Always do your research!

A good place to start is www.paymentpractices.net/scams.aspx (you may have to scroll down; the page gives me a lot of white space at the top). The list

is both scrollable and searchable, and, thanks to the generosity of Ted Wozniak, the Payment Practices list owner, is free even to non-subscribers.

Another free source of information is the Scammers Directory, managed by João Roque Dias, CT, at www.jrdias.com/jrd-translator-scammers.htm. You have to scroll down through a lot of text (which you may find very useful) before getting to the list, which has at least the bare-bones information you need. The list is interactive, in the sense that you can supplement it by submitting appropriate data to João; he has provided a link for that.

The ATA website does not have a list of names to watch out for but does provide a wealth of information on the subject (just enter the word Scams into the "Search this site" box). So does www.proz.com/about/translator-scam-alerts/. ProZ has a list of names too, but only paying members can access it.

Finally, have no qualms about asking your colleagues in an appropriate forum. There are many such sites; the best charge a small fee, which is well worth it, are carefully managed, and have a searchable archive. I can also recommend WorldPaymentPracticesFree on Yahoo Groups (<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/WPPF>), which is... yes, free and not stringently managed but does have a searchable archive. The search box is just above the Messages list, but you'll have to join Yahoo groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com>) and WPPF to see any of that.

We'll never be completely safe, but together we'll be safer.

If you have something to add to this subject – and all hopes are that you do – Liv may be contacted at bliss.mst@gmail.com.

ATTENTION CONFERENCE ATTENDEES: BRING YOUR CAMERA OR SMARTPHONE

We are inviting everyone to take pictures of SLD activities and members during the San Antonio Conference and to submit the best of them (number unlimited) to us for publication in these pages.

All photos used will be attributed to their takers, who will also be welcome to contribute a brief professional biography to our pages.

Send pictures to slavfile@gmail.com.

Impressions from the First Ukrainian Translation Industry Conference UTIC-2013

Boris Silversteyn

The First Ukrainian Translation Industry Conference took place in Kiev May 17-19, 2013 and was attended by Galina Raff and myself.

The Conference was very well organized. The organizers stressed that in planning and preparing the UTIC they had used lessons learned from ATA conferences.

There were over 350 attendees from 17 countries (the country list is provided at the end), including 200 freelancers and 100 owners and employees of translation companies, as well as faculty and students from several educational institutions, and software developers and vendors. There were also representatives of GALA (Globalization and Localization Association), ELIA (European Language Industry Association) and the organization Translators without Borders.

It is interesting to compare the UTIC attendance numbers with those of ATA conferences. As the population of Ukraine is about one-seventh of the U.S. population, the 350 UTIC attendees would be equivalent to about 2400 attendees at an ATA conference. Well, we had 2400 attendees only once – in 2009 in New York City, at the 50th ATA Conference celebrating ATA's 50th anniversary. Not bad for a first attempt, UTIC!

At the pre-conference reception on the evening of May 17 we met Ukrainian SLD member Maxym Kozub, who has attended many ATA conferences, and he introduced us to a number of new Ukrainian and Russian colleagues.

At the UTIC-2013 opening session I presented ATA President Dorothee Racette's greeting to the Conference, described the ATA mission, structure and activities, stressed the benefits of ATA membership, and made a pitch to the attendees to join ATA.

ATA had a booth at the Conference, where copies of *Translation-Getting It Right*, *Interpreting-Getting It Right*, the Membership booklet and 2013 issues of *The ATA Chronicle* were displayed (and eagerly grabbed by UTIC attendees). Many attendees showed great interest in getting information about ATA, and Galina and I answered numerous questions, such as "How does one become an ATA member?", "How much does membership cost?" and

"How would I benefit from it?" Another FAQ was "Do I need to come to the U.S. for a certification exam?" Interest in ATA was especially high among college students.

Conference speeches and presentations were given in one of three languages — Ukrainian, Russian and English, and high quality simultaneous interpretation was provided. The program was split into three sections: *The Art of Translation* (13 presentations), *The Technology of Translation* (15 presentations), and *The Business of Translation* (12 presentations).

I was favorably impressed with the quality and professionalism of the presentations I attended.

I would like to mention that the pre-conference reception and coffee breaks during the conference were generously (judging by the variety and cornucopia of berries, pastries, chocolate candies and juices) supported by UTIC-2013 sponsors. The closing ceremony ended with a "Sea of Champagne" (and it was an endless "sea"), also courtesy of the sponsors.

At the closing ceremony the organizers announced the date (May 17-18) and place (Kiev) of UTIC-2014, and offered lower early (before September 1, 2013) registration fees (equal to the UTIC-2013 early registration fees) and a 10% lower cost of sponsorship packets.

All in all, these were very productive and enjoyable two and a half days.

Below is the list of countries UTIC-2013 attendees came from: Ukraine, Russia, USA, Belarus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkmenistan, and UK.

Boris Silversteyn (bsilversteyn@comcast.net) is ATA accredited in both directions between Russian and English and also works into and out of Ukrainian. He is currently the Secretary of ATA's Board of Directors, having previously served on the Board for two terms, the Language Chair for English to Russian grading, an English into Ukrainian grader, and a member of the SLD Leadership Council.



Boris Silversteyn chats with UTIC Conference attendees.



Galina Raff poses with a new colleague.

SLD 2013 Banquet

Thursday, November 7, 7:00PM at

ACENAR (www.acenar.com)

146 E. Houston St., San Antonio, TX 78205-2223 , 210-222-2362

Acenar offers a sophisticated version of Mexican cuisine

MENU

First Course:

Ensalada Citrus/Citrus Salad

Spinach, orange, grapefruit, queso Manchego, candied pecans with a piconillo citrus vinaigrette

Second Course:

Arracheras/Skirt Steak (or Chicken)

Grilled marinated **beef or chicken** served with grilled onions, charro beans, guacamole & pico de gallo

Cochinita Pibil/Roasted Pork

Achiote marinated pork slowly roasted in banana leaves served over dirty rice

Enchiladas Verdes/Green Enchiladas

Chicken-filled tortillas, tomatillo sauce, jack cheese, corn, crema fresca, Mexican rice & refried beans

Hongos y Calabacitas/Mushrooms & Squash Tacos

Roasted mushrooms and squash served with black beans & homemade corn or flour tortillas

Third Course:

Mus de Chocolate Mexicano/Chocolate Mousse

Silky cinnamon-spiked mousse with bananas and whipped cream

Tea or Coffee service, and Chips and Salsa

Price: \$45 per person, including tax and gratuity

Guests make the main course menu selection at the event; each place setting will be provided with a menu. Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages are available for purchase.

All menu items are gluten free except for the flour tortillas; corn tortillas may be substituted.

Please coordinate any other special dietary requirements with Fred Grasso (frdgrasso@satx.rr.com) by 10/24/2013.

Transportation: a 15-minute (.7 mile) walk from the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel. Water taxi service (<http://riosanantonio.com/rio-taxi>) is also available with river front departure from the Marriott Riverwalk (not to be confused with, but virtually next door to the conference hotel).

Payment of \$45.00 should be made by PayPal (**preferred**) or check received **on or before 10/24/2013.**

- To **pay by PayPal**, go to the PayPal website (www.paypal.com) and select the "Send Money" tab. Fill in the amount (\$45.00) and choose the "Friends and Family" option. In Step 2, use the following e-mail address: jriedl@wi.rr.
- To **pay by check**, send a check made out to John Riedl at:

John Riedl

1028 East Juneau Avenue, Apartment 725

Milwaukee, WI 53202