

Confessions of a Would-Be Hyperpolyglot

Joseph Mazza

When I was a lad in the 1970s, I dreamed of becoming a hyperpolyglot. You know the type—the ones who speak about 60 languages, can effortlessly greet every member of a UN delegation in their native tongue, and wind up in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The Cardinal Mezzofantis of the modern world. I may not have known the word “hyperpolyglot,” but I certainly aspired to be one. And I knew it would take time, but I was willing to invest the 10 to 15 years I foolhardily imagined I would need. For a while, I would stop at nothing in this quest. One day, in college French class, my professor spied me reading an Icelandic grammar after I had finished a quiz early. I would like to think I was trying to multitask, not to provoke. And he was not angered that I was not reading Molière. He simply asked, with no little skepticism: “*Pourquoi l’islandais?*” I confessed my hyperpolyglot ambitions. He gave me a shrug and proclaimed dismissively: “*Mais, c’est impossible.*” At the time, I knew he was wrong. Now, four decades later, I know he was right, at least in my case. I may be the Chief of the Translating Division at the US Department of State—the oldest LSP in the country. And I may see dozens of languages cross my desk in any given week—treaties in Dari and Vietnamese and Latvian, to name a few. But my Icelandic is nil, and a great many other languages I have studied, then neglected, are barely on speaking terms with me.

One of those languages I left along the way is Russian, and when the ATA Slavic Languages Division asked me to speak at the 58th Annual Conference last year on how Slavic languages propelled me to my lofty perch, I felt a disclaimer was in order. You see, I had translated my last Russian text in 1996—an article on the Orthodox Church in Estonia. For a fleeting few years around that time, I fancied myself an expert in Orthodox terminology in Russian. But since that swan song, it has been French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian all the way. And in recent years, managerial duties have left me little time to translate even



Joseph Mazza

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NORA FAVOROV acted as the principal editor of this issue of *SlavFile*.

those. Yet Russian was a key steppingstone to my current post, and the story of our erstwhile romance is worth telling.

By the sixth grade, I had taken a stab at French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Polish—the latter three being semi-heritage languages in a second/third generation American family that seemed hell-bent on speaking only English. I was self-taught, as there were no language courses in my elementary school, and I felt the time had arrived for a language in a different alphabet. I borrowed the only “teach yourself Russian” book in my public library. The alphabet was not so daunting for me—I learned the Cyrillic easily. But the declensions were not easy at all; I had set German aside because of the case endings and now had to deal with six sets of them, not four. I was about to send Russian packing too, until I saw the three-syllable word that changed my life: *karandásh*, the Russian word for “pencil.” I think it was the accent on the last syllable that stole my heart. How could I know the word was actually Turkic in origin (*kara* = black and *taş* = stone or slate)? I repeated it over and over again, and resolved to make the Russian language part of my life.

Apart from taking my junior high geometry notes in Cyrillic-disguised English, which did not help my math grades, I made desultory progress in Russian until high school. Fortunately, I had the privilege of attending a school in the Philadelphia exurbs that taught Russian. My first teacher—John Behun—had founded the program in the 1960s, and had been named top Russian teacher in Pennsylvania. My second teacher—Michael Naydan—has now become one of the country’s leading professors of Ukrainian, at Pennsylvania State University. I owe Dr. Naydan a great deal, for it was he who taught me the word *skipidár* (turpentine), which is hands-down my second favorite Russian word. Both he and Mr. Behun were inspiring teachers. Our classes sang *Katyusha*, read *Crime and Punishment* (in English), and devoured Misha Fayer’s two *Basic Russian* textbooks. And in one of the early lessons, I was glad to encounter the sentence “*Ya pishú karandashóm*” (I write with a pencil). My favorite word sounded even more beautiful in the instrumental case!

Although the 1970s coincided with a period of détente in US/Soviet relations, there was still something vaguely clandestine about being a high school student of Russian. And that only added to the thrill. I would occasionally borrow a Soviet newspaper or magazine from the classroom to read on the school bus, and that was indeed a deliberate provocation—I wanted my schoolmates to ask me why I was studying the language of our arch-rival! During my senior year, as Soviet interest in Afghanistan grew, I made the decision to major in international affairs, and to use my study of Russian to save Western democracy. Without abandoning the mastery of several dozen languages along the way, to be sure.

I started college at George Washington University (GWU) at the ripe old age of 16, traveling by train the summer before freshman year to DC, to take my Russian placement test. The Slavic Department Chair himself, the formidable Dr. Yuri Olkhovsky, administered the handwritten exam in the well-stocked department library. I placed into second-year Russian, which was a

disappointment to me. But while my test was being graded, I had a chance to feast my eyes on books on every Slavic language—including what we then called “Byelorussian,” which I had never seen in print before. It is hard for today’s Internet generation to imagine how elusive even an entire language could be to someone who lived far from a big city library. I completed three years of Russian study at GWU, and my three professors there enriched my life beyond measure. Not only did they raise my proficiency in Russian—they shared with me their life stories, all of which were fascinating. Professor Mary Fetler Miller grew up in interwar Latvia, and had sung with her siblings in an internationally acclaimed act—precursors of the von Trapp family singers! Professor Helen Bates Jakobson, born in Czarist Saint Petersburg and raised in Harbin, Manchuria, gave us a glimpse into bygone times and distant places. And Professor Irene Thompson was easily the best foreign language teacher I ever had—only she could make verbs of motion and the concept of aspect fun. Meanwhile, my quest for hyperpolyglot status was beginning to flag. I dropped my courses in Chinese, and concentrated on French and Spanish, along with Russian.

Shortly before college graduation, I was invited to interview for a clerk/translator position at the Navy Department, in the distant suburb of Suitland, MD. My high school chum, Elizabeth Griffin (also a fellow Russian student, and today a successful translator of several languages), was working for the Navy’s translation office at the time and had told her boss about me. Before the big job interview, she cautioned me: “Be sure to bring in your portfolio of translations.” I had to confess that I had no portfolio of professional translations whatsoever...only my schoolwork. But the interview went well and before long, I was making the arduous three-transfer ride out to the Navy’s offices in Suitland, where I would learn to be a translator.

I felt like a kid in a candy store. Russian was the common currency of nearly every linguist in that office, no matter how many other languages they knew well (and most knew quite a few). We younger translators were encouraged to branch out into other languages too, as long as a seasoned reviewer was on hand to help us. So while a good portion of my time was spent translating Russian texts on naval and other defense matters, I was still able to pursue Romance languages, and add Italian and Portuguese to my repertoire. The office had an extensive library of dictionaries and grammar books in dozens of languages, so it was possible to dabble for the first time in Albanian and Turkish and any number of others. And one of my colleagues, Russell

(Rastsislaŭ!) Zavistovich, was an actual real-live Belarusian, who helped me with my still nascent semi-heritage Polish—once widely spoken in his home town of Vilnius.

One of the best things about that Navy job was that each day I was required to scan the daily Soviet press for articles of naval interest. The big three titles in those days were *Pravda*, *Izvestiya*, and *Krasnaya zvezda* (Red Star, the Soviet Defense Ministry newspaper). Now it needs to be said that even though late-era Soviet journalistic prose was far from scintillating, it was still a thrill to have a ringside seat as Brezhnev was succeeded by Andropov, who was replaced by Chernenko, who was then followed by Gorbachev—all within the space of a few years. Ironically, it was Gorbachev’s ascent that spelled the end of the Soviet Union, and the end of my career as a Russian translator.

When I first began scanning the Soviet press, many of the front-page headlines concerned the seemingly endless visits the Communist Party leaders of the various Warsaw Pact States paid to one another. Brezhnev, Husák, Kádár, Honecker, and Zhivkov were battle-hardened after years in their posts, and all were born before the end of the First World War. The Russian newspaper jargon used to describe their meetings was stiff and formulaic: “The two leaders met in an atmosphere of friendship, mutual understanding, and socialist brotherhood.” There was little deviation from the set wording, so if CAT tools had existed, they surely would have helped us immensely! When we were bored with the stodgy reportage of major world events, we would ferret out interesting back-page articles, such as “Advances in Beekeeping Further Agricultural Output in Kaluga Oblast.” The glorious word for “beekeeping” in Russian is, of course, *pchelovódstvo*—I will never forget it! Who can forget a word that begins with a consonant blend the likes of “pch”? Next to *karandash* and *skipidar*, *pchelovodstvo* is my third-favorite Russian word.

But once Gorbachev took over, the change came quickly. I remember vividly the day my professional world changed. It was in the late 1980s, and the Soviet leadership was conferring with one of its Warsaw Pact colleagues. The *Pravda* article ran the usual story, or so it seemed at first. But the formulaic language was suddenly gone. Just like that, the leaders were reported as simply having “held a meeting.” No “socialist brotherhood.” Not even any “atmosphere of friendship.” And “mutual understanding” was nowhere to be found. Within months, the Berlin Wall was tumbling down, and I was spiffing up my CV. We Russian translators were no longer feeling so

needed in the US Government. The State Department had an opening for a translator of Romance languages. So at the ripe old age of 25, I passed the test in French and Spanish, and, in due course, headed off to Foggy Bottom.

When I arrived at the State Department's Office of Language Services, the head of the Russian Team was Prince Alexis Obolensky. He and my boss in the Romance Branch struck a deal—as traffic permitted, I would be allowed to help with Russian translations. Getting to know a real Rurikid prince was one of the great joys of my life. In our long conversations, I felt as though I were stepping into a Tolstoy novel. The best part was watching the unravelling of the Soviet Union through his eyes and hearing his dreams of revisiting his grandfather's country estate, which he eventually did. But gradually, as I was promoted to reviewer of Romance languages, the office traffic began reducing my detours into Russian, and I had to hang up my *shapka* for good as a Russian translator.

And what of my quixotic quest to be the next Mezzofanti and speak every language known to man? At some point, with my bookshelves groaning from dozens of teach-yourself books in everything from Chechen to Shona, I realized my French professor had been right, *malheureusement*. There was not enough time in a day, or gray matter in my cranium, to hold even a fraction of these languages. What ultimately convinced me to give up that goal was my marriage to a Peruvian, who made Spanish a true second language for me. When I realized what it takes to master even one foreign language—learning the TV commercial jingles, the sports banter, the political jokes, the regional slang—I knew I could not spread myself too thin. So now, when treaties cross my desk in umpteen languages, I am handling the administrative side of their translation and certification, not the translation

itself. Still, I peek at the words, and lose myself for a moment in their far-flung beauty. The other day, I traveled to Vilnius in my mind, when I saw the Lithuanian word *įsigaliojimo* (entry into force). It sounds so much more bewitching in a Baltic language. And not too long ago, I had a visit from my long-lost acquaintance, Icelandic (we never really had a chance to be friends). But I have to stay on the wagon, so to speak.

Still, my talk last year at ATA59 for the Slavic Languages Division got me thinking about my first lost love, Russian, and prompted me to attempt a reconciliation of sorts. After so many years apart, we are starting to be on speaking terms again. We are taking it slow, the Russian language and I, aware of the baggage we share (for which I chivalrously accept 100% of the blame). Recently, an erudite colleague offered to coach me as I read Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* aloud in Russian. She discovered a previously undiagnosed problem with my unpalatized L's, but other than that, it has been fairly smooth sailing. Some of my professors could declaim vast tracts of Pushkin by heart, and I always vowed to read his masterwork during my stay on this planet. It has truly been a joy to discover the rich vocabulary, and to experience the enticing meter that brings out all the mobile-stress, fleeting-vowel grandeur of the Russian language. In a way, I have come full circle, because flipping ahead, towards the very end of the book, in Canto 8, verse 26 (give or take a few, depending on the numbering scheme), I happened upon my old friend, the word *karandásh*, looking especially radiant in the nominative plural, and still accented on the final syllable, after all these years.



Larry Bogoslaw, Emilia Balke, and Joe Mazza participating in the "Variety is the Spice of Slavic Life" panel presentation. Reprinted with permission of those depicted. PHOTO: Galina Raff.

Joseph Mazza, a 1984 graduate of the George Washington University (BA, International Affairs), joined the State Department's Office of Language Services (LS) in 1989 as a translator from Romance languages, after working as a translator from Russian and Romance languages for the Navy. He was Chief of LS's Romance Branch and, since 2006, has been Chief of LS's Translating Division, with responsibility for most State Department translations. In 2015, he began teaching Spanish/English translation at the University of Maryland. Since 2016, Mr. Mazza has served as Administrator of the ATA's Government Division. He is an incurable amateur historian and genealogist.



THE ADMINISTRATORS' COLUMN

Ekaterina Howard (ekaterina@atasld.org)

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In this column: updates and news from SLD Administrators and a reminder that we are always looking for volunteers to further SLD's initiatives--please reach out with your suggestions, feedback or new ideas!

Dear SLD members,

More and better CPD opportunities, at the ATA conference and beyond

Thank you to all of the members and non-members who have submitted their proposals to present at ATA's 60th Annual Conference in Palm Springs!

Thank you for your willingness to share your expertise and help others grow. At the time of writing, we do not have any information about which sessions have been accepted.

However, it is our pleasure to announce that Boris Dralyuk will be SLD's Greiss lecturer in 2019. The topics of his two sessions are: *A Guided Journey: The Importance of Mentorship* and *It's Got Flavor: Translating Odessa*.

ATA's 60th Annual Conference website is currently live, so make sure to check it for registration information and updates: <https://www.atanet.org/conf/2019/>. Eugenia will be handling the SLD dinner at the conference again this year, so if you have any suggestions, leads, or thoughts, you can reach out to her at eugenia@sokolskayatranslations.com.

If you are reading this, then very likely you do not believe that "the education you need" is restricted to the ATA's annual conference, as stimulating and exciting as it is.

We wholeheartedly agree.

In addition to the current SLD initiatives, here are two new ones that should make it easier for you to work on your translation and interpretation skills:

1. Maria Guzenko is soliciting reviews of Slavic languages translation and interpreting courses (and not only!). Please get in touch with her at maria.guzenko@intorussian.net to share the good, the bad and the excellent about the recent courses you have participated in.

2. We are very excited to announce that having long-form practical webinars for Slavic language translators and interpreters is now becoming a possibility. We are still working on exactly how and when with ATA HQ, so stay tuned for updates. Please reach out if you would like to nominate a presenter or suggest a topic for a practical "bootcamp": ekaterina@pinwheeltrans.com.

Are you SLD's new blog editor?

Although not exactly a Defense against the Dark Arts position, the SLD Blog Editor post does appear to be jinxed. We are looking for a new blog editor.

Requirements: willingness to work on 1 piece of content per quarter (can be lists of links, original articles, surveys or reposts, if approved by the original author/publisher).

SLD Podcast: business advice for when your translation career is in a rut

I am very grateful to Veronika Demichelis for her tireless efforts to record, edit and publish SLD podcast episodes that are not only fun for us to record, but useful for SLD—and not only SLD—members.

This season's podcasts are all about business, whether on talking to an agency owner about why it matters that translators are not just "vendors" (our interview with Sara Maria Hasbun <https://soundcloud.com/atasld/episode-12-interview-with-sara-maria-hasbun>), tips on interacting with project managers to make translation projects run smoothly from Alaina Brandt (<https://soundcloud.com/atasld/episode-13-interview-with-alaina-brandt>), or advice on being less of an order-taker and more of a translation partner from Julia Poger (coming soon), as well as tips on getting out of the career rut and getting out there from Chris Durban (also coming soon).

We welcome suggestions for future topics.

Multiple Double Margins

ATA Annual Conference session “From a Double Margin: Translations of Croatian and Serbian Women Writers into English,” Sibelan Forrester

Reviewed by Shelley Fairweather-Vega



Review reprinted from *Source*, the journal of ATA’s Literary Division, No. 77, winter 2018-2019, with the kind permission of that publication and the author.

ATA 2018 featured more treats than usual for the organization’s literary translators. Professor Sibelan Forrester, the Slavic Division’s Distinguished Speaker, was one of them. Dr. Forrester is Susan W. Lippincott Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Russian at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Besides teaching translation (and literature in translation), she is a published translator of prose and poetry from Croatian, Serbian, and Russian.

Forrester’s presentation was based on a study of anthologies and reference materials dedicated to Serbian and Croatian literature. Taken together, these are a fair representation of the literary canon in the region, as constructed, approved, and reinforced, as she points out, by time and tradition. Everywhere, this process of canon-making has tended to leave out women altogether or to relegate them to the “margins.” A common result, Forrester argues, is that women are recognized mainly for writing children’s literature or folktales, while their other work is often ignored or dismissed as “trashy” or just uninteresting. While one or two female names do come up again and again in these anthologies and studies, only collections that are expressly inclusive of gender seem to find a wider variety of women authors to

showcase. And women are represented much more frequently in recent anthologies than in older collections that represent the established canon.

Forrester listed several female writers from the region whose works have recently been published in translation (see box). There are also many who should be translated, and included in the canon, but are not (not yet, anyway).

One reason for this lack of representation is that women in this region are writing from a “double margin,” kept at a remove from the global mainstream not just by virtue of their gender, but also by history and geography. In Slavic studies in the Anglophone world, other languages consistently take a back seat to Russian, which has the advantage of a long, celebrated, and extensively translated literary culture full of recognized geniuses. Combine that tradition with the Russian Empire and Soviet Union’s geopolitical dominance over Eastern Europe (but not only Eastern Europe) for much of the twentieth century, and the reasons that other Slavic literatures have been less studied in the West become clear. Indeed, as Forrester points out, literatures in countries like Serbia and Croatia have been forced to develop partly in response to this geopolitical and cultural marginalization in the shadow of Russia, as a way of, on the one hand, embracing the Soviet project of increased literacy, education, and cultural pluralism, and on the other hand, asserting their own nationhood as unique cultural entities following the collapse of the Soviet system and, shortly thereafter, the breakup of bigger Eastern European countries like Yugoslavia.

All this means that translation—and translators!—can be a powerful force moving these writers out of the margins and into the (global, English-reading) limelight, where they can receive greater recognition than they might have enjoyed at home. All writers in this cultural and political margin struggle to make their voices heard, but women writers face a double challenge. Translation is vital. But how does the process of selecting women for translation work in practice?

Largely by serendipity, as it turns out. Forrester points out that it is often chance encounters



Sibelan Forrester chats with Lee Eisenberg after her presentation.
PHOTO: Galina Raff.

between the relatively small number of English-speakers reading Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian (BCS) with authors and poets in the region that result in successful translation projects. There is still no large community of readers proficient in these less-commonly-taught languages, so for anyone writing in those languages to “exist in literary study,” they must have their work translated into English. And specific programs aimed at highlighting work by women around the world, such as Women in Translation (WiT) Month, also direct attention to marginalized writers.

I had met Dr. Forrester before at American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) conferences, and I knew how delightful she is, so I was pleased to see her name on the ATA conference program. I was even more excited because I believe that the Literary Division can benefit immensely from more cooperation and cross-pollination with ALTA, and I applaud

every attempt to bring our two organizations closer together. I attended Forrester’s session knowing next to nothing about South Slavic literature, much less women writing in those languages. Still, the topic drew me in because it seemed relevant to my own work. I translate mostly from Russian, but have spent most of the past year translating work by women in Kazakhstan, another place where Russian literature and culture still seems to overshadow local writing. I left the session convinced that translators from smaller Eastern European languages are facing some of the same challenges as I am. There is plenty of work to be done.

Shelley Fairweather-Vega translates mostly literature from Russian and Uzbek to English. Her translations of women writers have been published by Routledge and AmazonCrossing and in Words Without Borders. Shelley is president of the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society.

She can be reached at translation@fairvega.com

Recent English translations of South Slavic women writers

Dubravka Ugrešić, multiple works of cultural criticism

Daša Drndić, *Trieste* (Trans. Ellen Elias-Bursać), 2012

Olja Savićević, *Goodbye Cowboy* (Trans. Celia Hawkesworth), 2015 (UK), 2016 (US, as *Adios Cowboy*)

Milica Mičić Dimovska, *The Cataract* (Trans. Sibelan Forrester), 2016

Jovanka Živanović, *Fragile Travelers* (Trans. Jovanka Kalaba), 2016

Vedrana Rudan, *Love at Last Sight* (Trans. Ellen Elias-Bursać), 2017

Ana Ristović, bilingual poetry collection (Trans. Steven Teref and Maja Teref), 2017

Lidija Dimkovska, *A Spare Life* (Trans. Christina Kramer), 2016

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Introducing Evgeny Terekhin and his Newcomer's Take on ATA59

Evgeny Terekhin

Being more people-oriented than task-oriented, my main goal for attending the ATA Annual Conference in New Orleans was to hang out, network, see, hear, soak up, ask, share, and... just be. For me, new insights, ideas, and motivations are often the result of plunging into new contexts—the sparks are generated when you come into close contact with new people, new experiences, new types of interaction. You never know what you are going to learn until you have learned it. It's the excitement of being open, having a learner's mind, being prepared for the unexpected. And when there are thousands of people in attendance, the unexpected is unavoidable.

So, led by my natural instincts, I took it easy and just followed my nose. Sure enough, it brought me to the welcome reception with all the New Orleans Cajun aromas floating around. I made new friends at the Slavic Languages Division and Literary Division tables, and immediately felt some longed-for kinship of spirit as people shared with me what they were working on, what they liked and disliked about the profession, and their goals in general. There is something about coming out of the shell of your home office and into the ocean of like-minded hard-core linguists.

As the saying goes: "If you do what you like, you will always like what you do." If there's anything I have learned after 20+ years in translation, it is this: it's only worth doing if you really enjoy it. It's hard work. But if you really like it, you will be rewarded every day in ways that go far beyond remuneration. But it's even more fun to meet new people who are doing what you do because they too love it. Their eyes sparkle as they talk about words and phrases. For them, words are not just tools to use but mysteries to participate in. They beckon and call. They draw you in.

As G.K. Chesterton once said, words and swords are alike in that they come to a point. I believe a good translation is like a sword; it pierces you with words

that make a point. One mark of a good translation is that it leaves a mark. Translation is the art of making a point—in the target language. Nowadays, we seldom talk about translation as art. In our day, it is all about CAT-tools, industry, AI, word statistics, and MT editing. It is those things, no doubt. But it is a lot more. It is primarily art. I was glad to find sessions that spoke about that. And it is my opinion that we should have more of those.

When all is said and done, when AI has had its way, there will still be a need for translation as art. It takes a human being to communicate like a human being. I like to think about translation as not something I produce but as something I experience. It's a Zen-like exercise of a mindful presence in the words and phrases as they find their way on the page. It's a child's game of juggling words without ever dropping one piece of meaning. I am afraid that if we limit our view of translation and speak about it in terms of industry, production, and output, our communication will eventually sink to the subhuman level. A machine may do an excellent job (eventually), but it will always lack a human touch.

Lydia Stone asked me to read aloud some Russian poems she had translated as part of her "50 Ways to Leave Your Author" talk; I gladly accepted. I must say I love reading aloud (my wife and I hosted a literary club in our apartment in Omsk). Lydia presented several Russian poems by Pushkin, Yershov, Krylov, and Chukovsky in parallel with her English translations, and explained in each case how she abandoned the author for the sake of the English reader. Her well-metered stanzas lulled me into the kind of poetic reverie that is so characteristic of the mood-changing effects of elevated poetry.

Gabriella Page-Fort's session "Publishing Literature in Translation: How Translators Help AmazonCrossing Bring Stories to New Readers" was

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**ARE YOU A NEWCOMER TO SLD OR TO A PROFESSION IN SLAVIC TRANSLATION
AND/OR INTERPRETATION?**

**DO YOU HAVE SOME ADVICE TO OFFER THOSE WHO ARE OR DO YOU SEEK ADVICE FROM THE MORE
EXPERIENCED?**

WOULD YOU SIMPLY LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO OUR READERS?

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A Gift of Tasty Morsels

2018 Susana Greiss Lecture: "A Translator's Path to Eastern Europe"

Reviewed by Christine Pawlowski

Sibelan Forrester, professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Russian at Swarthmore College, described in her 2018 SLD Greiss Lecture the fascinating and serendipitous path that led her into the literary translation of Slavic poetry and prose, in particular of the literatures of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia.

Attracted to Russian, and especially to its poetry, as an undergraduate, she continued her graduate studies in the Slavic Department at Indiana University in "Tsvetograd" (which is what we who studied there used to call Bloomington, IN). There her strong auditory side got the best of her, and (as she put it) she "waltzed" into Serbo-Croatian with its word stresses typically falling one syllable before the Russian mobile stress, and later into Czech with its initial word stress. Then, weary of a diet that was heavy in academics, she went on the IU exchange to the University of Zagreb.

Speaking of diet, writing this on Valentine's Day I am moved to liken her talk to a box full of pieces of candy, which she allowed us to sample, giving us delectable and instructive tastes of the life of a successful academic and literary translator. Here are some to be shared with *SlavFile* readers.

On connections among projects: Sibelan noted the value of connections among projects, of not rejecting a project out of hand because it does not, at first glance, look tempting. She gave the example of her experience translating Maria Stepanova who "didn't wow" her at first but whom she now considers one of the finest poets currently writing in Russian (see Sibelan's translation of a poem by Stepanova in the [summer 2018 SlavFile](#)). Any published translations get you "out there," and "people who notice one thing you did may come around to you for another thing."

On translating for academic purposes rather than reading pleasure: Sibelan translated Marina Tsvetaeva for her Ph.D. dissertation, which focused on Tsvetaeva's self-presentation as a female poet. Her advisor coached her to be faithful to the text when translating for literary scholarship, and she continues to adhere to that practice, commenting "I find it incredibly irritating when some other specialist in literature translates a work less literally and then bases some argument on the translation rather than the original."

On perceiving the signs of the times: In her first teaching position, Sibelan introduced a class on Russian female writers in the late 1980s to early 1990s that took advantage of how *glasnost*' had opened the door to women writers and others who had been suppressed or ignored in the Soviet period. To produce the reading list she wanted, she was compelled to translate the hitherto untranslated works, enhancing her self-perception as a literary translator as well as teacher.

On combining translation with an academic position: Making the mental shift from teaching to working at one's own research requires time and effort on one's part. However, it is easy to switch from teaching to translation: "The original is your muse, and that guidance is always there." Plus, the day job pays the bills.

On taking liberties translating scholarly writing: Sibelan told the story of translating Vladimir Propp's *The Russian Folktale*. Although she is normally very respectful of style and wording when translating scholarly works. *The Russian Folktale* was written in textbook style based on Propp's course notes, with Propp's students' notes contributing other parts of the text. Thus she felt she was within her rights to take a sharp knife to the work and make the translation easier and more pleasant reading.

On working with a living author: She told the story of writing a conference paper on the Serbian author Milica Mićić Dimovska. This led to her meeting the author and getting one of her books to translate (*Mrena*). The hoped-for publisher would not take it, so she self-published on demand. Sibelan reflected on both the joys and difficulties of working with a living author. At first the two had a lively communication, but as time went on, Dimovska became less approachable, as the tragic result of early-onset Alzheimer's.

On translation quality: One of Sibelan's new tasks is to edit the quarterly journal *Russian Studies in Literature*, which includes vetting the translations. She honors the integrity of the scholars and literary critics who have published in the best Russian journals of literary criticism and scholarship by assuring them that in the translations of their works, the "ideas [will be] properly conveyed, stylistic level observed, passing literary references or wording from proverbs recognized and adequately handled."

Continued on page 10

A Gift of Tasty Morsels

Continued from page 9

On supporting the translation industry:

Although she appreciates the resource of IU's Open Access, she encourages her students to buy copies of the translations they read in class.

On motivation: At present, Sibelan is working on translations of prose by I. Grekova; Stepanova's prose; and from Serbian, poetry by Marija Knežević. She says: "I am motivated mostly by the wonderfulness of the works, but also sometimes by wanting readers to get their 'vitamins' in terms of what such works add to one's understanding of a given culture and time."

There we have it: the box of tasty morsels from one who has lovingly and ably crafted a professional life built on literary translation from the Slavic languages.

Christine Pawlowski is a freelance Polish and Russian translator with an M.A. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Indiana University, "Tsvetograd." She is retired from teaching elementary music and enjoys being called "Busia" by her 10 grandchildren.

She is ATA certiFed (Polish-English). She may be reached at pawlow@verizon.net

Newcomer Conference Review

Continued from page 8

very interesting, as she talked about how AmazonCrossing is actively searching for great international reads for a global English-speaking audience. Turns out they are constantly looking for interesting titles, and their list of translated books is very diverse. I didn't know AmazonCrossing was currently the biggest producer of translated literature in the US market. You can actually go to their website and register as a literary translator, and if they have a matching job, they will contact you.

As I was listening to other translators share their professional experience, I thought how lucky I was to be a freelancer. Despite all the risks of the trade and all the self-marketing I have to do, I can never lose my job because I am the one who hired me. I get to choose what I do, who to work for, and how much to do. I can work out of my car by the lake, on an airplane, in a café, or on my couch. It was encouraging to see and hear other people who do the same and love it. Networking is a great source of motivation for me, and in New Orleans I got it all.

Evgeny Terekhin is an En-Ru and Ru-En translator with a master's degree in English and German. Born and raised in Omsk, Russia, he brought his family to the US in 2016. In the course of his 25-year career, he has translated and edited over 150 books, brochures, and tracts across a wide range of fields such as children's literature, marketing, psychology, spirituality, healthcare, business, and law. He lives in Friendswood, TX and can be reached at terekhin11@gmail.com. Website: www.russiantranslators.org

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Are you disappointed to find so few articles in our pages pertaining to your Slavic specialty? Frankly, so are we, but only you can do something about this deplorable situation. Volunteer to write something pertaining to your language(s); alternatively, suggest an article you know of that we might get permission to reprint. We do not require our authors to be members of ATA; we are pleased to publish relevant articles from those who are not. We do require that articles be under 2500 words in length and written in English, except, of course, for examples in Slavic languages. We very much look forward to hearing from you!

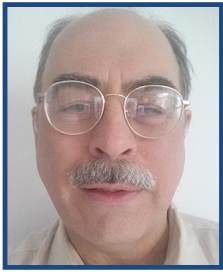
Send contributions related to:

Polish to Christine Pawlowski pawlow@verizon.net

Ukrainian to Olga Shostachuk: olgalviv27@yahoo.com

South Slavic to Martha Kosir: kosiro01@gannon.edu

We are without language coordinators for the remaining Slavic languages. Would you like to volunteer for your language? Send contributions on them to Lydia Stone: lydiastone@verizon.net



English vs. Russian Tenses

Paul B. Gallagher

Summary and expansion of a presentation given at ATA59 in New Orleans

My original assignment on the Slavic tense panel (“How to Get Tense: Translating Verbs into and out of Slavic Languages”) was to cover both English and Russian tenses in ten minutes, which forced me to limit myself to an outline. For the *SlavFile*, Nora Favorov has graciously offered me the flexibility to “revise and extend my remarks.”

The English Tense Framework

At first glance, the English tense system seems needlessly complex. But if we boil it down to a handful of essential elements, we can get a handle on it.

The first of these is the past vs. nonpast (“present”) time frame. By this I mean that the speaker/writer begins by deciding whether his narrative does or does not take place in a past time frame. If not, he chooses from the nonpast tenses in the upper half of Figure 1. If so, he chooses from the past tenses in the lower half of Figure 1.

The nonpast tenses in English are typically called “present” tenses, but they need not be associated with present events or situations. They are also used for statements of general truth and events or situations that are not tied to any particular time:

The moon is made of green cheese.

Cows eat grass, but lions eat meat.

Whether you agree with these statements or not, the point is that the speaker intends not to limit them to any particular time. They may be continuous or repetitive, but either way, when used in this sense,

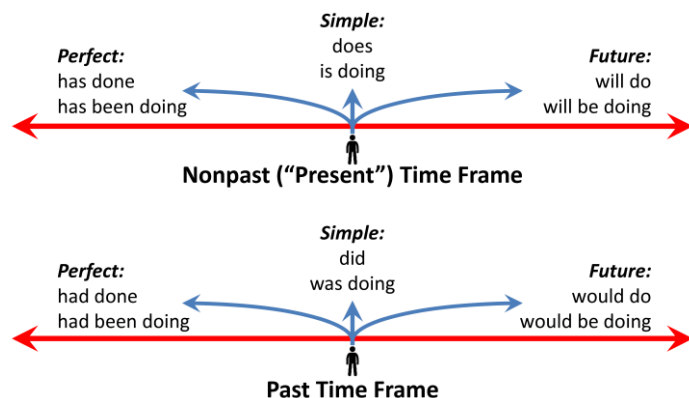


Figure 1. Past vs. Nonpast Time Frame in English

the English present tense aligns well with one use of the Russian present imperfective.

Character assassinations are typically expressed with simple tenses (general truth); the choice of a progressive makes it a temporary aberration:

I knew he was an idiot. [character flaw]

Я знал, что он — дурак. [вообще]

I knew he was being an idiot. [momentary slip]

Я знал, что он ведет себя как дурак.

[временно]

The next dimension we need to consider is that of simple vs. perfect vs. future. Simple tenses are used for events or situations at or near the narrative time frame (the point in time where the speaker is “standing” as he views the events he describes).

Perfect tenses are used for events or situations earlier than the narrative time frame, and future tenses are used for events or situations later than the narrative time frame. In the past and future tenses, the key is that these events or situations are viewed *from the perspective* of the narrative time frame. Thus:

When I arrived at the theater, I realized that I had forgotten my ticket, and would have to rush home to retrieve it.

I'm basing this presentation on what I have learned as a native speaker, and I will focus on how this system relates to the Russian one.

Events can also be presented in chronological order, but that equalizes their importance, whereas the use of perfect and future tenses keeps the primary focus on the narrative time and makes the other events secondary—relevant, but only insofar as they relate to the main event.

Typical uses of perfect tenses:

- earlier events or activities with results or consequences for the narrative time frame;
- events, activities, or situations continuing from earlier into the narrative time frame.

Perfect tenses generally reject time declarations, but accept open-ended ranges (*since...*, *beginning...*, *from...*, *recently*, etc.). American English often favors simple *be* + participle (*is/was gone*) where British English favors perfect (*has/had gone*).

Note also that simple tenses in *if* and *when* clauses have future meaning (after the time frame):

If we arrive on time, we will get good seats.
If we arrived on time, we would get good seats.

Typical uses of future tenses:

- events, activities, or situations occurring/prevailing after the narrative time frame;
- may be one-time, repetitive or continuous;
- *will/would* can express prediction or commitment (ambiguous);
- *shall/should* can express prediction or requirement (ambiguous).

The third dimension we need to consider is simple vs. progressive tenses. English progressives generally denote events or situations actually in progress at the narrative time frame. Certain types of verbs do not accept progressives, but most do.

The book is lying on the table. [at the time of the narrative = right now]

We were walking past Carnegie Hall. [at the time of the narrative]

But: *I smell smoke.* [verb of thought/sensation]

Typical uses of progressives:

- events or activities (not situations) in progress at the moment, or pending;
- usually one-time events or activities, but can be a series of similar events or activities;
- focus on a brief period around the moment (temporary).

For many verbs, the choice between simple and progressive is affected by pragmatic factors, and can often influence meaning:

I consider her an expert on the law.

I'm considering whether to file for divorce.

In the first case, *consider* means “think” in the sense of “believe” (*считать*) and is not limited to the present moment. It would be weird to say, *I'm considering her an expert on the law* (only at this moment, but not in general). In the second case, however, *consider* means something closer to “think” in the sense of “mull, ponder” (*размышляю*) and is specifically associated with the present moment or time near the present. It would be unusual to say, *I consider whether to file for divorce* (I think about that regularly?), so such uses of the progressive should be confirmed with a time adverb: *I often/sometimes/never consider whether to file for divorce.*

Finally, English makes extensive use of modal verbs (*can/could, may/might, shall/should, will/would, must, ought*), whereas Russian usually favors adverbs and adverbial phrases (see below).

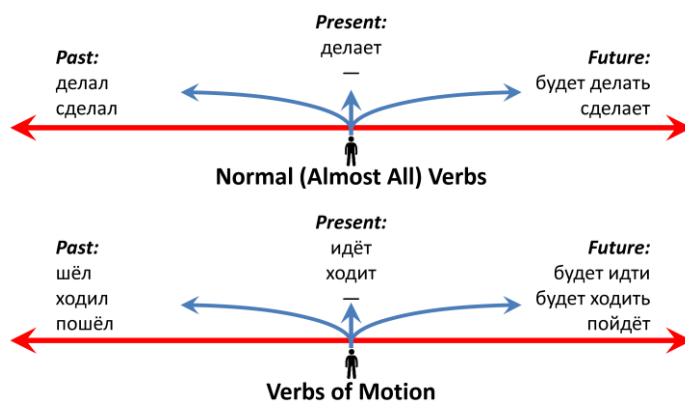


Figure 2. Russian Tense and Aspect

Now, how do speakers manage these parameters? Typically, when a speaker wants to establish a time frame, he makes a declaration of when things happen(ed). These are typically adverbs of time (*last week, on Thursday, nowadays*) or subordinate clauses relating the narrative time frame to some known event (*when we got to the theater, during the 2016 election*). The speaker can then modify the time frame by making another declaration, or he can simply present events in chronological order and allow the listener to infer that the clock is advancing. Including a few adverbs such as *then* or *after that* encourages this inference.

The Russian Tense/Aspect Framework

Russian verbs have three possible tenses (past/present/future) and two possible aspects (perfective/imperfective). Verbs of motion have a third possible aspect, multidirectional. In form, the imperfective present looks just like the perfective future, and future imperfectives are periphrastic forms with the auxiliary verb *быть* “to be” (see Figure 2). Although the Russian system appears to be simpler than the English one, it has to do the same amount of work, so it has quite a bit of subtlety and nuance.

The first dimension we must consider is perfective vs. imperfective. Perfective verbs denote instantaneous, brief, completed, or successful events or situations, or starts and ends of events or situations. These are incompatible with the present tense, so they can only be past or future. In contrast, imperfective verbs denote general truth (as described above), or else prolonged, repeated, ongoing, failed, or dubious events or situations. These allow all three tenses. Verbs of motion additionally have multidirectional forms, which denote repeated or cyclical motions or round trips.

Since they developed from periphrastic perfect forms with loss of the auxiliary verb, Russian past-tense verbs agree with their subjects in number and gender (he/she/it/they); cf. French sentences like *elles sont venues*. Present- and future-tense verbs agree in person and number (I/you sg./he, she, it/we/you pl./they) as in most Indo-European languages.

In negative sentences, Russian will typically use the imperfective in the sense “not at all, never,” but the perfective when focusing narrowly on a particular instance:

— *А ты обедал?* — *Еще нет.*

“Have you eaten?” “Not yet.”

— *А ты пообедал?* — *Нет, дочка заболела.*

“Did you eat?” “No, my daughter got sick.”

In the first case, the question is whether the listener is still hungry, so English uses the present perfect. In the second case, there was an expectation that the listener would eat at a particular time/place, so she responds by explaining why that expectation was not met. English uses the simple past here as if resuming a past-tense narrative.

In imperatives, Russian typically uses the imperfective as a softener—“do as much or as little as you like, don’t feel pressured to complete the task”:

Угощайтесь! [feel free to take as much food as you would like]

Садитесь, пожалуйста! [Please have a seat]

English more typically softens invitations with what I call “split verbs”: *take a look*, *have a seat*, etc. These denote brief instances of the named activity, and soften the request by asking for only a little of it.

But if there is an imminent danger requiring brief action, softening is inappropriate, so Russian will use the perfective:

Осторожно, не упади, там очень скользко!

Traps and Common Errors (Ru→En)

- English present perfect with specific time (other than starting point):
When a specific time frame is established, English prohibits the present perfect (though past perfect does accept this usage: *I had seen the movie a week earlier* but never *I have seen the movie a week ago*).
- Future tense in *if* and *when* clauses:
English uses simple tenses in such clauses with future meaning (*if I pass the test, when I get my license*); Russian uses future tenses.
- Progressives with verbs of thought and sensation:
English uses simple tenses with such verbs (*I think you’re right*, not *I’m thinking you’re right*) even though the sense fits the progressive definition perfectly.
- Adverbials instead of modals:
English will typically use modals (*He might come*) where Russian will use adverbials (*Возможно, он придёт*).
Things are a bit different with *will/would* in their future sense:
surely/certainly/probably/likely/etc. are often used to tweak the speaker’s confidence level:
He’ll (probably) come.

Deprecated Uses in Modern English

- *If... would have done* instead of *if... had done*;
- Modals + *of* instead of *have* (misunderstanding of contractions with *’ve*).

Both of these constructions are common in the American vernacular but recognized as errors by literate speakers.

After six years of graduate school majoring in linguistics, Paul B. Gallagher left academia to become a Russian-to-English translator in 1985. Most of those 34 years have been devoted to sci-tech texts. His proposal to expand these remarks to a full one-hour presentation has been approved for ATA60 in Palm Springs.

Thanks to Larry Boguslaw for creating the “Getting Tense” panel; without him this presentation would not have been possible.

Helpful and/or Interesting Resources Discovered by SlavFile Editors and Readers

Nora Seligman Favorov

Understanding Those Half Words

I recently translated a psychology article that discussed research from the 1970s into the growing trend toward “autonomous speech.” The author, a devotee of Activity Theory, Soviet psychology’s brain-child, described the trend in terms of that theory: back when pre-mobile, pre-industrial people tended to live their entire lives surrounded by a more-or-less unchanging set of fellow villagers and shared with their neighbors the same basic activities—hunting, fishing, chopping wood, farming, etc.—the members of any given conversation were likely to have the shared context necessary to understand one another without a lot of specificity and elaboration.

Today, on the other hand, we are all engaged in our own unique activities. We and those around us have hundreds of different professions, hobbies, and sports; we read all different sorts of books, watch different TV shows, browse different internet sites, and come from very different ethnic and family backgrounds. So we are much less likely to understand one another c полуслова (“from a half word”—without having things spelled out in detail).

If indeed everything we translated or interpreted reflected a high level of “autonomy” (the sort of speech the psychologist Paul Kay described as “suited to the communication of novel, exact, emotionally neutral information to an unfamiliar addressee”), our jobs would be a lot easier. What makes translating and interpreting so challenging is that much of what we have to translate is nonautonomous. Since we usually aren’t members of the community from which this speech comes (for example, an Anglophone literary translator working on a novel involving the Soviet military will not have had firsthand experience of the sorts of “half words” one soldier might use in communicating with another), we have to strain to fill in the gaps and grasp the subtleties hidden between the words that the author’s peers would easily appreciate. I edit a lot of Russian>English translations, and many of the errors I find myself correcting seem to have been

made because the translator was not looking at the big picture or simply lacked the cultural and historical knowledge needed to read between the lines, to understand those half words.

This lengthy introduction to this edition of Web Watch is really just my way of preaching the importance of cultural literacy in our target language(s)—to the choir, no doubt.

Before I get to this issue’s picks, let me repeat the usual message: I work exclusively from Russian into English, so my recommendations will be of interest primarily to colleagues working in that same language pair in the humanities. The editors of *SlavFile* encourage (dare we say plead for) Web Watch submissions relating to other Slavic languages and other specialties. Send us links—to blogs, glossaries, entertainment, or education that could help your fellow *SlavFile* readers improve their T/I practice, or that they will simply find interesting.

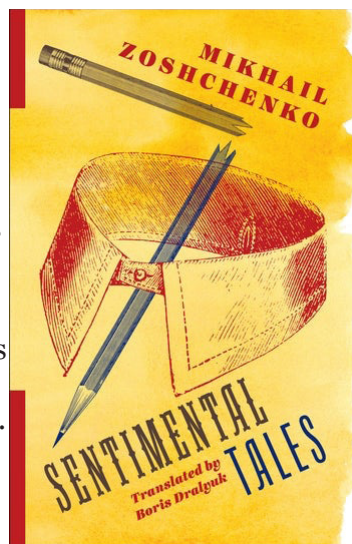
There is, admittedly, so much wonderful material out there on the internet to help us keep up our language skills and cultural literacy in our working languages that even the speed readers among us cannot find time to benefit from more than a miniscule fraction of them.

For this edition of Web Watch, I suggest two resources that translators working from Russian into English can use to improve their cultural literacy.

Boris Dralyuk’s blog: <https://bdralyuk.wordpress.com/>

In his blog, the seemingly indefatigable Boris Dralyuk covers a wide range of subjects related to Russian literature and culture with humor and insight, offering samples of his own and his colleague’s translations, commentary on and reviews of various works related to Russian history and culture, and a variety of interesting Slavic-related tidbits. And the great news is that he will be our 2019 Greiss speaker at ATA60 in Palm Springs.

In addition to being a highly productive literary translator, Dralyuk is Executive Editor of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. His recent translations include Maxim Osipov’s *Rock, Paper, Scissors, and Other*



Stories (NYRB Classics, 2019; translated with Alex Fleming and Anne Marie Jackson), Lev Ozerov's *Portraits without Frames* (NYRB Classics, 2018; edited with Robert Chandler and translated with Maria Bloshteyn, Robert Chandler, and Irina Mashinski), Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry and Odessa Stories* (Pushkin Press, 2015 and 2016), and Mikhail Zoshchenko's *Sentimental Tales* (Columbia University Press, 2018), among others. He is also the editor of *1917: Stories and Poems from the Russian Revolution* (Pushkin Press, 2016) and co-editor, with Robert Chandler and Irina Mashinski, of *The Penguin Book of Russian Poetry* (Penguin Classics, 2015).

The Russian television show «Намедни» on YouTube

Each episode of this fast-paced TV show from the 1990s and early aughts takes you through a year of Soviet and then Russian events and culture, with episodes covering 1961 through 2003. Thus far, I have only watched a couple of years, but they felt like a crash refresher course on the current events, personalities, products, and fads that Russians alive at the time would have needed no more than a half word to reference to a contemporary. As a translator of Russian literature and history, I derived the same sort of benefit from watching this show as I did from absorbing Genevra Gerhart's *The Russian's World* and *The Russian Context* (edited by Eloise M. Boyle and Genevra Gerhart) when I was first starting as a translator of Russian. Using newsreels and other footage, the show's host and writer Leonid Parfyonov takes you back to one year at a time in the life of the Soviet Union and Russia. I highly recommend that all Russian into English translators whose work involves Soviet and Russian history and culture or is littered with "nonautonomous speech" and "half words" to watch all available episodes. Just type "Намедни" and any year between 1961 and 2003 into the YouTube search field. Technical tip: If you're like me and watch YouTube on a television, you might want to do the search on your computer and save the episodes for easier viewing on your television (where, at least using Roku, Cyrillic is not available and in any event typing the names of the shows you're looking for is a bit cumbersome).

Шепот, робкое дыхание (Whispers) by Afanasy Fet (1850)

Шепот, робкое дыхание.

Трели соловья,
Серебро и колыханье
Сонного ручья.

Свет ночной, ночные тени,
Тени без конца,
Ряд волшебных изменений
Милого лица,

В дымных тучках пурпур розы,
Отблеск янтаря,
И лобзания, и слезы,
И заря, заря!..

Whispers, timid breathing,
trills of a nightingale,
the silver and the shiver
of a sleepy rill.

Pale light and nighttime shadows,
shadows without end,
all the magic transformations
of eyes and lips and brows.

In smoky clouds, a rose's purple,
the shine of amber beads,
and the kisses, and the tears,
and the dawn, the dawn!

(translated by Boris Dralyuk)

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

On this 250th anniversary of the birth of the Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov, I have decided to devote this and the following installment of “*SlavFile Lite*” to him. Several years after first producing a book of translations of his fables, I have recently been again immersed in translating him (for *Russian Life* magazine) and reading about him (for a talk I was to give that was postponed due to a dental emergency). I am generally interested in hearing from our readers about their experiences being taught Krylov, whether in school in the Soviet Union or Russian Federation or perhaps here as part of a Russian literature program. Friends educated in the Soviet Union tell me that there were only a select few Krylov fables taught to and possibly memorized by school-children. I gather that he was portrayed as a man of the people who argued against various (not completely imaginary) evils of capitalism in his verse. My reading of his fables suggests this is far from 100% true (to be discussed in Part II of this column).



KRYLOV PART I

I have been reading about Krylov the man. He was born into the very lowest rung of the nobility ladder, as his father had been a common soldier promoted to captain for bravery. His father died when he was 11, leaving only a trunk full of books—the family came away virtually penniless. At approximately the age of 12, Krylov began to work as a civil servant, rising gradually through the ranks, more rapidly after he became well known as a writer. He ended his career as head librarian of the Saint Petersburg library, where he remained for 29 years. It is not clear how much work he actually did, but his last post was undoubtedly a well-remunerated and cushy one.

He had little or no formal education, but when he was a very young man his literary skills earned the attention of a prominent intellectual and wealthy noble, who took him into his household as tutor. This gave him the opportunity to listen to the conversation of some of the writers and thinkers of the day. On the other hand, he was also occasionally asked to serve at table when there was a shortage of waiters. In his younger days, he wrote a number of satirical plays and started a journal, which Catherine II quickly put an end to. His very first book of fables did enormously well, and he continued to write fables almost exclusively for the rest of his life. He was always a great success, not only with the reading public but with the royal court as well.

To say Krylov was personally eccentric is an understatement. He was known for his gluttony, slovenliness, physical laziness, wit, and good humor, at least with his friends. Here are a couple of anecdotes about him.

The story goes that once the Empress saw Krylov (at a gathering she was attending) and asked that he be brought to greet her. Krylov declined on the grounds that his appearance was not suitable but finally agreed. The Empress found herself confronting an obese man in a jacket covered with greasy stains and trousers artistically decorated with “suspiciously yellowish” spots, and with his big toe fetchingly sticking out from a hole in his boot. The owner of the toe, attempting to kiss the Empress’s hand, barely avoided sneezing in her face. The Empress seemed delighted, laughed loudly, and had a new suit and deerskin boots sent to the man she called “the wisest of all Russian writers.” Another time, when Krylov had been invited to a masquerade, he could not decide on a costume and asked some friends for advice. They advised him simply to bathe thoroughly, guaranteeing that no one would then be able to recognize him. (From the website: Русская семерка, January 16, 2017.)

Evidently Krylov liked to escape from urban life and stay with his friends in the country. On one such occasion he went for a walk with his normal unkempt hair but also in his birthday suit (в чем мать родила). The local peasants, not used to even his

usual clothed slovenly and obese figure, concluded he was a wood-demon (леший) and attempted to drown him. Luckily, his host managed to save him. (Ibid.)

Although the uninitiated may believe that Krylov took much of his work from Aesop and La Fontaine, this is not actually true. Of his 184 published fables, only 17 are said to have been adapted from Aesop and 17 from La Fontaine. No list of Aesop's fables is exactly like another, and some fables with the same name seem to be very different, so the number of fables he actually originated is hard to pin down. At any rate, the majority of Krylov's fables are his own inventions.

My sense of Aesop is that he was trying to impart rules of good (even moral) behavior to members of a polytheistic society where the gods, though having power over mortals, did not set a particularly good example. His method was essentially to show how good behavior pays off (you reap what you sow), while bad behavior has negative consequences. Krylov, on the other hand, lived in a monotheistic society in which abstract morality was, at least in theory, defined by religion. However, no explicit Christian teachings or precepts figure in any of his fables, although Greco-Roman gods sometimes appear. Indeed it might well have been considered sacrilege to have any reference to Christianity in this world of talking and moralizing animals. There is a fair amount of you-reap-what-you-sow preaching in Krylov's original fables, but it is not ubiquitous. More often, a particular bit of behavior (frequently animal but also human) is held up for ridicule or condemnation for inefficiency, with either an explicit or implied moral. My research as to the supposed origin of his original fables suggests that many of them are sarcastic references to national events or behaviors he objected to, and rejoinders and counter accusations to various criticisms directed against him or his friends. Sometimes his works contrast bad or satirized behaviors with the good behavior of another creature, person, or inanimate object (flower, barrel, cart, etc.). If an explicit moral is not supplied or signaled by negative consequences, there is frequently an animal or bird "truth teller" in the fable who provides it. My own clear favorite of all of Krylov's morals is from the fable called "The Geese."

Баснь эту можно бы и боле пояснить — Да чтоб гусей не раздражить	The moral of this tale I would explain But geese when riled are such a pain.
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I have read virtually all of Krylov's fables and translated between a third and a half of them, I believe I have identified two prevalent themes that are barely touched upon in Aesop. I call these the "civil service" theme and the "true art" theme. There is some overlap between them, but although the "civil service" theme occurs in more of his fables, "true art" is easier to explain, so let us start with it.

Krylov seems almost obsessed with the nature of real art, and with satirizing and ridiculing those who denigrate (and even slander) true art or mistake false art for true. I hope I may be pardoned for assuming this is a result of his concern for his own reputation as a poet. His most common, and to readers unmistakable, embodiment of true art is the nightingale, but there are others.

1. In "The Cuckoo" and "The Eagle," King Eagle awards his crony Cuckoo the title "Official Nightingale." Cuckoo, much puffed up, arranges a concert for the forest and is essentially booed. Cuckoo complains to the King who replies.

«Мой друг! - Орел в ответ, - я царь, но я не бог. Нельзя мне от беды твоей тебя избавить. Кукушку Соловьём честить я мог заставить; Но сделать Соловьём Кукушки я не мог».	"My friend," the Eagle with a smile replied. "I'm helpless to restore your pride. Conferring titles on our friends is something all kings do: But only God can truly make a Nightingale of you."
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2. In “The Ass and Nightingale,” the Ass listens politely to the Nightingale’s song and then says:

«Изрядно, - говорит, - сказать неложно, Тебя без скуки слушать можно; А жаль, что незнаком Ты с нашим петухом; Еще б ты боле наострился, Когда бы у него немножко поучился», Услыша суд такой, мой бедный Соловей Вспорхнул - и полетел за тридевять полей. Избави бог и нас от этаких судей.	Except the Ass, who showed his wit By saying, “Good, I wasn’t bored a bit! But all the same, It is a shame, You never came to visit at our farm Some pointers from our cock would do no harm. Indeed, I think they’d be just what you need, To really bring your singing up to speed.” The Nightingale took off above the trees. God save us all from critics such as these.
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3. In “The Nightingale and the Cat,” the Cat, a music lover, captures the Nightingale (ostensibly) to hear him sing, but the poor bird is too terrified to do more than squeak and is devoured. For this thinly veiled criticism of a newly strict censorship law, the moral is:

Сказать ли на ушко, яснее, мысль мою? Худые песни Соловью В когтях у Кошки.	The moral here? It’s simply that You can’t expect to hear sweet songs From birds trapped where no bird belongs— Within the clutches of a Cat.
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4. In “The Rooster and the Cuckoo,” Krylov posits a mutual admiration pact to explain why some false art is praised. I would think he probably had some human roosters and cuckoo rivals in mind.

Тут Воробей, случась, примолвил им: «Друзья! Хоть вы охрипните, хваля друг дружку, - Все ваша музыка плоха!..» За что же, не боясь греха, Кукушка хвалит Петуха? За то, что хвалит он Кукушку.	“What awful nonsense both of you emote,” Exclaimed a Sparrow, close at hand. “When neither one of you can sing a note. Why all this praise? I do not understand (Since Rooster squawks and Cuckoo’s always flat) What game you think you’re playing at.” If praise unearned you want, it’s easy to obtain Just offer tit for tat—that’s how you play this game. Thus, Rooster praises Cuckoo so she’ll do the same.
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5. Of course, real art need not be represented by a nightingale; nor should it fear criticism. In “The Flowers,” Krylov describes two pots of flowers, one silk and one real, standing near an open window. In the sunlight the artificial one looks as good, if not better; but then it rains, and the silk one is destroyed. Krylov points out:

Таланты истинны за критику не злятся: Их повредить она не может красоты; Одни поддельные цветы Дождя боятся.	No critic can destroy a talent that is real— Its beauty can’t be stained. For only artificial flowers feel Afraid of rain.
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6. In “The Poet and the Millionaire,” one of Krylov’s high-style classical fables, a poet complains to Zeus (Jupiter in the original; Krylov uses the two names interchangeably) who has deprived him of riches while giving them to a man devoid of brains, talent, or any other merit. Zeus replies:

«А это разве ничего, Что в поздний век твоей достигнут лиры звуки?» Юпитер отвечал: «А про него Не только правнуки, не будут помнить внуки. Не сам ли славу ты в удел себе избрал? Ему ж в пожизненность я блага мира дал. Но верь, коль вещи бы он боле понимал, И если бы с его умом была возможность Почувствовать свою перед тобой ничтожность,— Он более б тебя на жребий свой роптал».	King Zeus just sighed, then gently said, “How can you say you’ve nothing when Long ages hence you’ll still be read; Much honored and beloved by men? But if you’d had mere wealth instead, Like him, you’d be forgotten too. Indeed if he’d the wit to see How poor he is compared to you, Like you, he’d come complain to me.”
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Clearly, at least on paper, the poet considers art the highest calling. And unlike the poet in the fable, Krylov lived quite well on a government salary. Despite the moral of “The Flowers,” Krylov devotes quite a number of fables— and, it would seem, resentment—to critics and criticisms and what he calls slander.

7. “The Passersby and the Dogs,” I have read, is specifically directed against recent criticism of a friend of Krylov’s, but I would imagine the author intended it to apply to critics in general, his own included.

Завистники, на что ни взглянут, Подымут вечно лай; А ты себе своей дорогою ступай: Полают, да отстанут.	The envious, if you attract their eye, Will bark at you like any mongrel pup. But if you pass serenely by, They’ll yelp a bit and then shut up.
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8. A much stronger attack on critics (aka slanderers) is given in the poem “The Snake and the Slanderer.” Here, a poisonous serpent and a slanderer argue about who should be given more honors in Hell. Beelzebub, who is in charge, decrees:

Но Вельзевул не потерпел того: Он сам, спасибо, за него Вступился И осадил назад Змею, Сказав: «Хоть я твои заслуги признаю, Но первенство ему по правде отдаю; Ты зла – твоё смертельно жало; Опасна ты, когда близка; Кусаешь без вины (и то не мало!), Но можешь ли язвить ты так издалека, Как злой язык Клеветника, От коего нельзя спастись ни за горами, Ни за морями? Так, стало, он тебя вредней: Ползи же ты за ним и будь вперёд смирней». С тех пор клеветники в аду почётней змей.	But Beelzebub, this insolence just could not take: And back to second place he shoved that snake. And said, “You’ve served Hell well, but be resigned He must come first, and you behind. Although your fatal bite is given with no cause, You slaughter only those who’re near, And cannot poison from afar—the greatest of your flaws. But slanderers do that and more, oh yes, that’s very clear. Their tongues do damage far and wide From them their victims cannot flee or hide. This makes it easy to decide He’s done more harm than any snake. Of that there’s no mistake. He gets top honors here.”
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Given the fabulist's personal peculiarities described above, one might imagine that a fair amount of criticism and ridicule was directed at him on that account. And yet I can find only two of his fables that appear to deal with criticism of actual personal faults, even metaphorically.

9. "The Musicians," one of Krylov's most famous works, is interesting in this regard. It talks about what true art is, or more precisely is not, but also stresses that personal virtue and a talent for producing true art do not necessarily go hand in hand.

<p>«Помилуй ты меня», сказал он с удивленьем: «Чем любоваться тут? Твой хор Горланит вздор!» — «То правда», отвечал хозяин с умиленьем: «Они немножечко дерут; Зато уж в рот хмельного не берут, И все с прекрасным поведением».</p> <p>А я скажу: по мне уж лучше пей, Да дело разумеи.</p>	<p>The guest cried out amazed, "What is there to admire? This choir is dire." The host replied, unfazed, "Well, yes, I know their singing stinks, And yet not one among them drinks. And no one could impeach The morals shown by each." Myself, I'd rather hire men who may get tight, But have the proper skills and do work right.</p>
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In Part II, I will discuss what I think of as Krylov's "civil servant" theme, consider if he was indeed the liberal portrayed to Soviet schoolchildren, and cover some translation issues.

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Moscow Audiences Applaud ‘Jewish’ Play at Vakhtangov Theatre – But Why?

Reviewed by Susan Welsh

Smile Upon Us, Lord (Улыбнись нам, Господи), 2019 (film)

Directed by Rimas Tuminas, director of the Evgeny Vakhtangov Theatre, Moscow. Based on novels by Grigory Kanovich; adapted for the stage by Kanovich and Tuminas. Stage play filmed for international cinema by Stage Russia HD, director Eddie Aronoff. In Russian, with English subtitles. 167 minutes including a 15-minute intermission. See StageRussia.com for showing schedule in the United States and other countries. The film will be on the [Kanopy](https://www.kanopy.com/) streaming platform later this spring (free university and public library access) and soon thereafter as a pay per view on the [Digital Theatre](https://www.digitaltheatre.com/) platform.

Three old Jews set off in a broken-down cart from their shtetl to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. It is the turn of the 20th century.

Efraim Dudak fears for his son, a revolutionary imprisoned in Vilnius for attempting to assassinate the Governor General of this province of the Russian Empire. Efraim's friend Šmulé-Sender Lazarek has offered his cart and horse to take him there to see what he can do for his son. Avner Rosenthal is a bankrupt and lonely grocer mourning his shop, which has burned down.

It is a strange and moving play, but equally strange and interesting is the understated controversy that has surrounded it since it opened in Moscow in 2014. What is the film really about?

Smile Upon Us, Lord has been in repertory at Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre for five years, playing to packed halls and wildly enthusiastic audiences. It is based on two novels written in the 1980s by Grigory Kanovich. The author was born in Lithuania and has lived in Israel since 1993. Director Rimas Tuminas, also from Lithuania, staged the play in Vilnius in 1994, and 20 years later, as the Artistic Director of the Vakhtangov Theatre, he revived it in Moscow. The play has toured North America, Europe, and Israel, receiving rave reviews, and has now been added to StageRussia's offerings.

Why are Moscow audiences so thrilled by a play about a couple of Jews who lived more than a century ago, making their way across the Pale of Settlement to what they call the “new Jerusalem” of Vilnius? Or is it, as some say, not really about Jews at all?

Author Kanovich certainly thinks it is. He told John Nathan of TheJC.com in February 2018, as the Vakhtangov troupe was performing it in London, “My major motive was my desire to create a monument to honour my long-suffering people and to strengthen

the national consciousness of Russian-speaking Jews in all of the Soviet Union.”

But not everybody looks at it through the author's eyes.

Under the sensational headline “How Russian theatre is speaking truth to power,” the *Financial Times* in 2018 made much out of a joke told by one of the characters (Q: “How do you feel about our government?” A: “Same as about my wife. Kind of fear, kind of love, kind of want a different one.”) But the *FT* also quoted producer Oksana Nemchuk, who disagreed with that political interpretation, saying that Russian audiences understand the play's themes more broadly: “For us, it's a story about humanity and parenthood. The symbols are universal.”

Moskovskii Komsomolets (mk.ru) ran a headline in 2014, “The non-Jewish question for the Vakhtangovites,” highlighting the irony that the main characters are all played by ethnic Russians (not mentioning the marvelous Yulia Rutberg, who plays Efraim's goat; see more below). And when the troupe went to Riga, Latvia, in 2016, the headline in *BaltNews.lv* was “Sergey Makovetskiy: ‘We aren't playing Jews.’”

Historian Dmitriy Trubochkin points out that separation from one's children is a theme that captures the interest of many. In his book on Rimas Tuminas's Moscow plays (2015), he cites the water-carrier Šmulé-Sender's plaintive cry: “Wherever we have traveled, wherever we have gone, we are always going toward our children, but they are going farther and farther in the opposite direction, and we can never reach them. What can you do, Efraim, if all you can do with your children is bid them farewell?” Šmulé-Sender (played by **Aleksei Guskov**¹/Evgeny

1 Two actors alternate in some of the roles in this repertory production. The actor whose name is in boldface is the one who performs in the StageRussia.com film.

Knyazev) has lost his son in the wave of emigration to America; the aging parents wait in vain for a word from him. Trubochkin writes that many Moscow viewers see this as the most important idea in the play. It is easy for this reviewer to see how this could be true for the many Russian parents whose children have emigrated to Europe or the United States since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

So what do the *Vakhtangovtsi* think?

The Director

Director Rimas Tuminas emphasizes the universal themes of tolerance, forgiveness, and family in times of crisis and approaching disaster. When the troupe toured American cities in 2015, the *Boston Globe* quoted him saying that the raging conflict over Ukraine “resembles the era in Kanovich’s novel.... That’s why I thought it was the right time to revive the play in Moscow.” He further underlines “the eternal story of parents bidding farewell to their children ... parents trying to get closer to their children, while the children are moving away from the parents and starting to live their own lives”—and this is certainly true. In London in 2018, he went on to say that “now the world is dangerously balanced between war and peace. In the play, characters undertake a journey at a very unstable time. Their world is not just unbalanced, it’s horrifying, and the characters feel both its rising madness and approaching calamity.... I believe forgiveness is the main theme of this story. An attempt to put oneself in someone’s shoes, to understand and therefore to forgive is a universal idea” (TheJC.com).

Tuminas does address the Jewish theme of the play when specifically asked, but he answers guardedly. In an interview with a Russian-language TV station in Toronto during the play’s 2015 Canadian tour (“Rimas Tuminas on antisemitism in the theater and the thirst to create”—*vestnik.ca*), the journalist asks, “Does antisemitism play a role, either for friends or adversaries of the play?” The director replies, “Yes, it plays a role. That bothers me, and all the actors; they understand that it is ... well ... a bit dangerous [“чуть-чуть опасно”]. They talk about it particularly in Moscow. But the actors are winners, they don’t play the characters of Jews, but they play *people*, the PERSON [“человека,” with an emphatic accent on the last syllable].... The director interprets, the actor interprets, they determine the

scene. To determine and to interpret the PERSON.”

In several interviews while on tour in Europe and America, he spoke of the Lithuania of his childhood (he was born in 1952), where he grew up in a tolerant community of various ethnicities. “We never felt any difference in the nationalities but, at the same time, the Jews had traits of character which the Lithuanian people don’t have, being creative, witty, very clever,” he told John Nathan of TheJC.com, speaking through an interpreter. “So they somehow colored our life with these talents.... I have never declared this before, but I have to say that I have always felt a kind of penitence in the company of Jewish people. I feel profoundly an aching loss that can never be replaced. I’m Lithuanian and I do not have any Jewish origins. But that doesn’t prevent me from feeling these things acutely.

“But these feelings are not on the surface of this production; rather they hide somewhere inside.”

In the 1994 Vilnius production, he says, the actors felt a strong connection to the Jewish element of the story for historical reasons, whereas the Moscow cast 20 years later found it more difficult to relate to the characters in the play. “One day I found a very simple explanation for them—I asked my Russian actors not to think that in this play the Lord smiles only upon Jewish people. It is not ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The actors understood and they showed compassion to their heroes. The Lord’s smile is for all of us, the characters, the actors, the audience ... for everyone.”

Sergey Makovetskiy, the actor who plays the part of Efraim (alternating with **Vladimir Simonov**), discussed with journalists in Riga in 2016 how Tuminas instructed the cast. “For me,” says Makhovetskiy, “there was never a question of national-

ality. There is no national color in our performance; we don’t speak with a shtetl accent. And Rimas Vladimirovich Tuminas was categorical: ‘Comrades, we are not playing Jews,’ he told us. We are not playing Jewishness, so what kind of local color can there be? As soon as local color begins, excuse me, it’s not Jewishness.” (BaltNews.lv)



Rutberg: “For me, the Jewish theme in this play is very powerful.” *currenttime.tv*

The Universal and the Particular

But excuse me! To suggest the play is not about Jews or Jewishness is a bit like saying *Fiddler on the Roof* is not about Jews, or Shakespeare's historical plays are not about England. Anything that aspires to the status of art (not melodrama) must of necessity be both universal and particular. And *Smile* is most certainly about Jews.

Let us return briefly to the plot.

After receiving a blessing from the local rabbi and hitting the road, one of the first people our travelers encounter is Khloyne-Genekh, a clownish figure of no apparent occupation who is pretending to be blind, feeling his way along with a stick. He probes each of the travelers with his switch, first the shoulders, then the face, and then the crotch. Satisfied with his investigation, he turns to the audience and loudly exclaims, "Good morning, Jews!"

The audience at the Vakhtangov Theatre cracks up.

Later the travelers are attacked by "wolves" (men in dark padded jackets), not all that subtle an image of a pogrom. Arriving at the gates of Vilnius, Efraim and Šmulė-Sender are assaulted by a team of people wearing gas masks, who spray them with what must be disinfectant or insecticide. The ominous scene becomes more intense in the finale, as our heroes are stripped to their underclothes and a large metal frame appears, hanging above the darkened stage. They raise their arms and start to rotate it. It is covered with ornaments, stars of David, and candles. There is a sepia-toned portrait of a large family, all seated, with a bearded *pater familias* in the center. On the back of that panel are hung various household implements, women's slippers, men's boots, children's shoes. The two images evoke the familiar ones of piles of confiscated shoes and the family portraits of those who perished in the Holocaust.



Guskov: "It's a Russian play! That's all there is to it!"
currenttime.tv

Dispute Among the Actors

Despite such obvious markers, the "is it really about the Jews" theme keeps bubbling to the surface.

Actor Viktor Sukhorukov plays the part of Avner Rosenthal, who is more than a little crazy, fixated on the fire that destroyed his shop, his livelihood, and his sense of worth. He longs to become a tree. The other travelers and the audience seem to find him endearing in his vulnerability. Sukhorukov spoke about the play with Russian TV's Channel One after the 2015 New York performance. The interviewer commented on "the centuries-long Jewish wisdom and sad humor, imprinted in folklore. It could be very funny, this play, if it were not so sad." Sukhorukov retorted with evident impatience or even anger, "I don't play that kind of stereotyped image of a Jew. No! When I speak it's as if I'm talking about myself. I talk as if about my own pain, my own dreams. I invest myself in this play as if it were not Avner Rosenthal's building that burned down, but my own."

The "anything but Jewish" (whether "Russian" or "universal") view, while common, is not without dissenters. Several members of the cast participated with Tuminas in a panel discussion during the New York visit, where an impassioned dispute erupted between Yulia Rutberg and Aleksei Guskov. It's worth watching this 3-minute televised excerpt (in Russian) (<https://www.currenttime.tv/a/27055762.html>).

Rutberg, the only woman and the only Jew, is seated on the audience's left; five men are lined up on the right. Tuminas has stated his view of the importance of the universal fathers-and-sons theme: that our children are always moving away from us. Then Rutberg seizes the microphone: "I absolutely agree with what the guys and Rimyas Vladimirovich are saying. But for me, the Jewish theme in this play is *very* powerful." Guskov shoots back, with exaggerated pathos: "It's about what to do with our children, when all we can do is say goodbye. I think about this, I know it for myself. These are *my* ruminations. How can we say this is Jewish? It's Russian! It's a Russian play! That's all there is to it! Nothing more to discuss!"

And where is it written that it can't be both?

Discovering the feisty Yulia Rutberg was my greatest pleasure in working on this review. Those who understand Russian and love poetry will enjoy her televised performance on "the importance of poetry in the life of the ordinary person" (50 minutes):

<https://tinyurl.com/y63vpn3m>

Please send your comments to the author at
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Slavic Poetry In Translation

Feature Editor: Martha Kosir

ELKA VASSILEVA--Bulgarian Poetry in Translation

Introduction by Daniela Vassileva

Translation by Daniela Vassileva and Martha Kosir

Elka Vassileva was born in 1951 in a small town in northwestern Bulgaria, but she spent most of her life in the city of Bourgas, on the Black Sea. There, she built a career as a journalist, raised a family, and forged unforgettable friendships that have profoundly influenced her poetry.

So far, Vassileva has published six books of poetry. Her poems have also appeared on the pages of literary magazines in Bulgaria and abroad. She is also a recipient of numerous Bulgarian literary awards.

Writing, for Vassileva, is a way of healing her soul. She writes when the inspiration arrives—be it at home, at the beach, at a bus station, or at a café. Her poems are imbued with questions of existentialism and symbolism, revealing her life experiences, complicated relationships, and never-ending questions about love in all its facets—happiness, sadness, loneliness, longing, desire, and more.

Vassileva follows a specific rhythm in publishing her books—they have all appeared at 5-year intervals. She likes to keep her poems to herself for a while, allowing them to mature and settle, before sharing them with the readers.

The poems introduced in this article come from her latest collection *Things to Love*, published in 2016. It contains 57 poems, which are divided into three cycles. The first one, bearing the same title as the book, is dedicated to the love between a man and a woman. The second cycle, entitled “Stones in My Shoes,” contains shorter verses that center on the question of human existence and on the purpose of dreams. The third cycle, “At the Base of Silence,” exemplifies a genuine and heartfelt poetic confession.

In *Things to Love*, the author writes about all four seasons, but her favorite remains the summer. Vassileva’s verses are infused with water and the summer breeze, because it is the season to undress the soul and reveal its very essence.



Elka Vassileva

<p>Вероятно Един ден ще позволя на дъжда да ме обича. Един ден ще захвърля чадъра на основанието и ще си измисля Париж. Един ден ще напусна парада, ще се смалю до точка и ще се закова за пискюла на клоуна. Един ден... Ще престана да се заричам без теб да заживея отново – просто ще го направя. Сега - една полярна нощ, в която ще приспя всичко, за което се заричам. И ще те сънувам...</p>	<p>Probably One day, I will allow the rain to love me. One day, I will throw away the umbrella of my essence. I will invent my own Paris. One day, I will leave the parade, reduce myself to a tiny point and latch onto a clown's tassel. One day... I will stop convincing myself I can start a new life without you. I will simply let go. Tonight, in this polar night, I will stop resisting the promises I have made to myself. I will dream of you...</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>From the cycle: "Things to Love"</i></p>
<p>Питам се Уж във вярна посока пътеката води, а по нея все грешни хора срещам. Дали не защото се сляха сезоните в долината на зимата в нас? Дали не защото оставихме свободата да ни употребява? Заразна е омразата, а нямаме ваксина против нея. Ще се отворят ли очите ни да видят – избелялата риза на лятото върху прясната се ветрее....</p>	<p>I ask myself I thought the path was leading me in the right direction, but all I happened upon were sinners. Is it because all the seasons have blended into one, in this valley of winters? Is it because we've allowed freedom to consume us? Hate is contagious, and we have no vaccine against it. Will our eyes open to see – the faded shirt of summer drifting in the wind over a pile of snow.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>From the cycle "Stones in My Shoes"</i></p>

<p>Сонет в ла минор Тъмната сила, прекосила съня ми, тъмните мисли – утаени и тежки... Стогодишна тъга във кръвта ми осъмна, стогодишна вина за провали и грешки.</p> <p>Преминават в кръвта издълбоко от корена наслоени във времето кръстопътища – възли. От къде съм получила този сноп от умора и несбъдния блян към поредното тръгване?</p> <p>От къде е дошла тази жар неизтляваща, разтопила леда на душата ми циганска? Уж съм смела и сиlena, на добро се надявам, но каквото да сторя – само зло ме настига.</p> <p>Не съдбовно проклятие, а избрана пътека предрешава посоката, определя завоите. Разпиляват се мигове, звездопади и екот, криволичат следите между чужди и свои.</p> <p>Ала зрялата ябълка над платната опънати пази изгрева в мен и ме води през тъмното прекосило съня ми, набараздило съня ми...</p>	<p>Sonnet in A minor A dark force has traversed my dreams, Dark thoughts – lifeless and heavy... One hundred years of sadness has awakened in my blood, One hundred years of guilt for failures and mistakes.</p> <p>Its roots course through my veins and entwine into knots - of time. How did I acquire this bound-up fatigue? This undying dream of another departure?</p> <p>Where did the never-ending flame, that melted the ice of my gypsy soul, come from? I may be brave and strong and believe in good, but no matter what – I am hounded by evil.</p> <p>It is not a fateful curse but a carefully selected path. Its direction is predetermined, its turns defined. Shooting stars, echoes, and particles of time disperse and interlace my residue with that of others.</p> <p>But a ripe apple sits above raised sails. It protects and guides me through darkness that has traversed my dreams and left traces behind... <i>From the cycle: "Things to Love"</i></p>
<p>Портрет</p> <p>Малко момиче ц големи обувки чака автобуса и подритва с обелените им носове камъчета, листа, обвивки от дъвка... Къдриците му си бъррят с вятъра. А обувките чакат да заспят, за да сънуват пътя, за който са създадени.</p>	<p>Portrait</p> <p>A little girl, in oversized shoes, waits for the bus. With the worn-out tips of her shoes, she kicks around little rocks, leaves, candy wrappers... The locks of her hair chat with the wind. And her shoes wait for their time to sleep and dream of the road for which they were destined.</p> <p><i>From the cycle "Stones in My Shoes"</i></p>
<p>Дилема 2</p> <p>Дали си струва да зазиждаш пукнатините на душата, ако през тях прозират цветовете и?</p>	<p>Dilemma 2</p> <p>Is it worth sealing the cracks in the soul if through them you can see its colors?</p> <p><i>From the cycle "At the Base of Silence"</i></p>

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Upcoming T/I Conferences in Eastern Europe

The Editors

There are a number of regular conferences held in Eastern Europe related to Slavic languages.



Ukrainian Translation Industry Camp-2019 will be held this year July 22–28 at the Meteorite children's camp outside Dnipro. As the website tells us: "The camp is situated in a pine forest preserve on the Samara River. The air is fresh and the water from the well is clear and refreshing. It's one of the most picturesque areas in Dnipropetrovsk region. The weather here in July is great — the days are warm enough for swimming, and the nights are pleasantly cool." Early-bird registration has already passed, but prices are reasonable and U.S. citizens need no visa to visit Ukraine. See: <https://utic.eu/en/o-konferentsii>

This year's Translation Forum Russia will be held August 23–25 in St. Petersburg. The website informs us that the conference is "the most ambitious and reaching event in the language industry in Europe and across the former Soviet Union countries. Every year it brings together 300-500 participants including representatives of such international organisations as the European Commission, UN Information Centre, FIT Europe, the Belgian Chamber of Translators and Interpreters and the World Intellectual Property Organisation. It has been held annually since 2009." See: <http://tconference.ru/en/>



The next Belarusian Translation Forum will be held September 14, 2019 in Minsk. The website informs us that: "The Belarusian Translation Forum is the largest event in the translation and interpreting industry in Belarus. It is the first and so far the only non-academic platform to share experience and to lead a constructive debate on issues in the translation and interpreting field in the country." See: <https://translationforum.by/en/welcome-to-the-belarusian-translation-forum-web-site/>

The editors of *SlavFile* would love to get reports from any SLD members who attend these or other conferences related to Slavic T/I.