



Translator and Duke University professor Carol Apollonio, pictured here with various bobble-headed versions of her primary research focus, is president of the International Dostoevsky Society. *SlavFile* is thrilled to publish a two-part interview with Dr. Apollonio on topics ranging from her own personal relationship with foreign languages, the interplay between language structure and translation, her experience translating Alisa Ganieva, and her thoughts on the extent to which translators should intervene to help the target audience understand a work's subtleties. Part II, which will appear in the spring edition of *SlavFile*, addresses her recent work on Anton Chekhov, among other topics of interest to translators. **Please see page 3.**

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<https://tinyurl.com/u6jnz3b>

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

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AN INTERVIEW WITH LITERARY TRANSLATOR CAROL APOLLONIO, PART I

Interviewer: Steven McGrath

Carol Apollonio is Professor of the Practice of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at Duke University and President of the International Dostoevsky Society. Her translated books include *Bride and Groom* (2018) and *The Mountain and the Wall* (2015) by Alisa Gavieva, and *The Maya Pill* (2012) by German Sadulayev. She is also the co-author of *Chekhov's Letters: Biography, Context, Poetics* (2018) with Radislav Lapushin and *Chekhov for the Twenty-First Century* (2012) with Angela Brintlinger. Her most recent project has been a travel blog following Anton Chekhov's travels from St. Petersburg to Sakhalin: <https://sites.duke.edu/chekhovsfootprints/>. Her latest book, a short introduction to Chekhov, called *Simply Chekhov*, is due out in 2020.

How did you become interested in languages, and Russian in particular?

As a Cold War baby, I was terrified we'd all die in a nuclear apocalypse. And I figured the main problem was that we just didn't know the Russian language; if we learned it, then of course we'd understand each other and not destroy each other and the world too.

The other thing was that my brain is wired to appreciate and learn foreign languages. I started with French, which basically was like feeding new but sort of familiar vocabulary into existing grammatical patterns. Latin was more of an intellectual puzzle and, fortunately, you don't have to speak it. Russian blew my mind: a grammatical structure as complex as Latin, a whole new vocabulary, and somehow you have to speak it too. I was hooked.

Would you say, then, that your interest in languages came before your desire to work specifically with literature? I see from my research that you've also taught Japanese. What other languages have there been in your life? Is there something unique that you can take from each of them?

Oddly enough, yes—language and politics, and then literature, though I've always been an avid reader, since even before I knew there was such a thing as politics. I think my younger self thought that language and politics would be a more practical and sober career choice than studying literature would be. Then, oddly enough, I became a literature professor, and also a conference interpreter and literary translator. I guess all my dreams came true (except for world peace, of course).

Japanese, yes. I taught the language for one year and translated a couple of books, but in the mid-nineties made a conscious choice to focus exclusively on Russian. Unsurprisingly, this coincided with a lot of interest in the world toward Russia (including employment opportunities) after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Other languages: French, Latin; in grad school, Polish and German, both of which, with a mighty struggle, I can read.

Of course, every language offers a window into the many different ways people think. Although we are all human beings, our language structure and vocabulary certainly shape our worldview (and I guess vice versa). So, when you learn other people's languages, you learn to look at the world the way they do and develop empathy and understanding. For me, the best thing about getting fluent in Russian has been the chance to be in situations in Russia where I feel that I belong, and that the conversations are just as real and comfortable in a human sense as those I have with friends in the US. And that goes for being in literary texts, too.

We translators know that there is never a perfect match between languages, even between individual words that are supposed to be translational equivalents, and of course language structures can be completely different. Regular people don't know this; they think that translation is about matching words.

- Some languages don't really distinguish singular and plural and, for whatever reason, in English we think this is an important distinction to make.
- Our tense system is very complex, but in some languages it is extremely simple (Japanese, Chinese). Deep inside your brain, maybe, the meaning is similar, but it comes out differently in the different languages. Once I analyzed eleven translations of a famous passage in Chekhov's "The Lady with the Dog" (the lovers at Oreanda looking down at the sea) and realized that each translator used a different combination of verb tenses in English! And they were good translations. So when you translate, you really are figuring out deeper meaning and deciding how to convey it in English, rather than just moving words around.
- In English and in Japanese, word order is important but in different ways. The negative comes at the very end of a Japanese sentence—so you really have to be patient and wait for the end. In Russian, word order is free, but most often with the most important word at the end of the sentence.

- Other languages don't have indefinite and definite articles. Try to explain how they work to speakers of those languages!
- English has a rich and diverse vocabulary; by comparison, the Russian lexicon is more limited, but to make up for it Russian has a rich and complex system of word formation (prefix-root-suffix).
- Different languages deal with the individual person differently. Russian's impersonal expressions detach emotional experiences from specific individuals and spread them through the environment. How can English convey this?

Learning about these and other language differences leads you deep into the human consciousness...I've studied Russian for 40 years but still stop now and then to ponder why a speaker or author used imperfective, as opposed to perfective aspect. It's exhilarating.

You make a number of interesting points, and I'd like to return to some of them later. For now, though, building on the topics of language and politics, differing worldviews and mutual empathy, I'd like to ask you about your translations of Alisa Ganieva's novels. How did you get involved with these projects? How do you prepare yourself to translate a novel set in the North Caucasus? This is an area that even most Russians know little about.

I was very lucky that Will Evans of Deep Vellum (a former student in my translation class at Duke) approached me with the proposal to translate Ganieva's "Праздничная гора" (*The Mountain and the Wall*). It is a great book, and I have to say I was very lucky to be entrusted with it. The second book came to me the same way.

We'd like to think that good books always find the right translators, but out here in the real world, a lot depends on sheer luck.

I knew nothing about Dagestan before I read Ganieva's books, so it gave me an opportunity to learn about this part of the world. The internet is a wonderful thing... (It is important to Ganieva that Dagestan is actually a part of Russia, not a separate country. Her writing focuses on this fuzzy boundary.) I do think that one great perk of being a translator is that you are constantly being educated.

That said, for me, translation is first and foremost about language, style, literature. What is most important is not what makes a culture unique (though that is extremely important), but what reading about it can do to help people understand our common humanity.

Literature does this by going deep inside the individual, beyond all the external exotic trappings, and showing us what we share in there, in our essential being.

And really it is about literature, the quality of the book, its language and style, its humanity and respect for the reader. A bad book does a culture no favors. Ganieva's three novels are very different from one another, and her third novel («Оскорбленные чувства» or *Offended Feelings/Sensibilities*) has nothing to do with Dagestan! She too lives in the land of Russian literature.

I would love to visit Dagestan sometime, but I have not had the opportunity yet.

I can certainly agree that respect for the reader and helping people understand our common humanity is paramount. Your translations of the novels very naturally integrate the reader into a social, political, and religious atmosphere that is largely unfamiliar even to those of us who have spent time in other areas of Russia. Wouldn't you acknowledge, however, that certain cultural particularities allow for various interpretations based on the reader's background? In the afterword to *Bride and Groom*, to give a more pronounced (specific) example, Ganieva reveals the importance of a Sufi mystical figure, the *Khidr*, in the novel, which would have gone past most readers even of the original Russian.

This relates to a different question I wanted to ask you as a Dostoevsky scholar. I was recently discussing *Brothers Karamazov* with a Russian author. This author argued that Dostoevsky could not be understood outside of his specifically Orthodox perspective. I myself can't help suspecting that Dostoevsky viewed his own work in a similar way. Speaking for the international readership, however, I stressed how millions of people from outside Dostoevsky's own cultural and religious world have found more universal themes in his work. What kind of balance should a translator try to strike between a "culture-centric" and "universal" reading of the source work? Is a more universal reading always better for the readers of a translation?

Yes, absolutely, readers interpret differently based on who and where they are. The Sufi text is a great example. (It was decided to add the Afterword in the English-language edition, though it was not in the original, and some readers found it controversial to have it. Afterwords of this type are not usual in fiction. Let each reader decide!) I am guilty of wanting this added. And really, there's a lot more in the text than Sufism, so why focus on that? I get it—and am still questioning myself about that. I singled out Sufism because I felt it was the layer of the text that readers would be most likely to miss. Nowadays, everyone is focused on radical Islam, so they'll notice that anyway...and other layers of the text are more accessible. But now I regret singling it out—let readers miss it if they must. By pointing it out and singling it out I feel I'm being manipulative in directing a particular kind of reading. Probably next time I would not add anything.

To an important degree, our conversation is zeroing in on the differences between translation as a craft and hermeneutics or interpretation. Certainly, we translators decide to highlight certain themes (often at the expense of others) with our word choices. But still we give the text over to readers to do with it whatever they want. That is out of my control, and the author's, and so be it. It frees us from responsibility, maybe, when readers do bad things based on their own reading of a text.

Indeed, this is relevant to the point about Dostoevsky readers, in particular Russians, with their complex history, and the issues surrounding Dostoevsky with respect to culture, politics, religion, and everything else. I've had this very same conversation with Russian colleagues. In some cases over there, Dosty is read as a prophet, a prescient religious teacher. This is partly because it's in there in the text, and partly an effect of the constrictions on the critical conversation during the (atheistic) Soviet period, which did not allow the subject to be discussed, and in fact marginalized Dostoevsky, partially for his identity as a religious writer (not to mention all the political stuff, of course). Let them read him their way, but when in the process they attack other readings as wrong (without good reason), then you don't have a conversation. And everything we say (and write) about literature should be a conversation, not about how we are righter than everyone else. Like everything else in



the humanities, the truth is elusive, and our readings are ethically fraught.

My own writings about Dostoevsky do focus on the religious nuances, which are so central to the writer. Without thinking about them, readers miss something vitally important. On the other hand, it is absolutely wrong to suggest that there's only one right interpretation, and critics and readers are in a race to decide what that is. It's so-o-o-o-o-o wrong to deprive readers of the freedom to read a text in ways that are meaningful to them.

Sorry.... a rant! I'm repeating myself (pity the poor interviewer/editor/reader...).

Our conversation is about translation, and I'd just say that though we have lots of power in what we do with a text, we cannot control the conversation. Recent, more literalist-oriented translators, have been meticulous about reinserting the word "devil" into *Brothers Karamazov* and other Dosty novels, even at the expense of good style. So be it—now readers will be more inclined to see that demonic theme (it's very important in my own reading of his work). But myself, if I were to translate Dosty, and I haven't yet, I would not be that meticulous on the word-for-word level, because my method is not literalist, but rather focused on creating a work of art in English that reflects and honors the original in a holistic sense. To use your terms, then, I am a "universalist" translator.

We can't help it, we are who we are, and our translations are kind of our own fingerprint. We should not be shy about owning our text (and welcoming other translators to the conversation). This is what I advocate in my writings about translation and in my teaching, when I ask my students to use a variety of translations—then we talk about them and find much more meaning in the text than we would have based on one translation.

Part II of this interview will appear in the spring 2020 issue of *SlavFile*.

Steven McGrath is an ATA-certified Russian to English translator who received a Master's Degree from Lomonosov Moscow State University. He translates material in the humanities and social and natural sciences. Steven lives in Iowa City, Iowa and can be reached at steven@mcgrathtranslation.com (website: www.mcgrathtranslations.com). He is currently serving as the SLD's Assistant Administrator.

NOTES FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNDERGROUND

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya (eugenia@sokolskayatranslations.com)

Steven McGrath (steven@mcgrathtranslation.com)

Taking over the administrative reins at the annual conference is a bit like being thrown into a fast-flowing river after a couple of swimming lessons in the backyard pool. This is by far the most active time of year for the division, between thanking speakers and planning for the next conference, finding new volunteers and helping them adjust to new roles, wrapping up the year, getting a new *SlavFile* out—the list goes on. On the plus side, that means there's always plenty to talk about in a new administrative duo's first column!

Slovo: The SLD Podcast

Have you checked out the newly-rebranded SLD Podcast, *Slovo*? Our previous host, Veronika Demichelis, left big shoes to fill, but our new host, Maria Guzenko, is already filling them wonderfully, with her characteristic hustle (and previous radio experience!). In the brief month since the conference, she has thought up a new brand, created a logo to match, found guests, recorded an episode, and even added the podcast to Spotify. That first episode of the new season is already out, featuring Shelley Fairweather-Vega.

Social Media and Other Modern Wonders

An ongoing challenge we administrators face is figuring out how best to communicate with our members and facilitate communication and connections among them. Social media platforms seem to rise and fall in prominence and reach, and that spells constant churn for our various groups, accounts, and other channels. In the aftermath of the annual meeting, the SLD proofreading pool has been officially closed, and the Twitter account is hanging on by a thread. The LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google groups have been useful broadcast channels that (hopefully) get important announcements to members, but there hasn't been much member-to-member discussion. And the blog is still looking for an editor!

We don't mean to be all doom and gloom about SLD's online presence—far from it! Each of these channels was set up in response to member suggestions, and what matters, in our opinion, is not the ultimate success or failure of a given platform, but rather the responsiveness to where our members are, where they want to see SLD-related activity, and how they want to engage with the division. And if it doesn't work, at least we gave it a shot! Nor will we shy away from trying more new platforms in the future.

Possible Mentoring Program

Speaking of trying out new things and enabling member connections, one suggestion that came up and was discussed at the annual meeting was arranging mentoring through the division. Unlike the formalized matching system of the ATA's mentorship program, we were envisioning something simpler: a central point of contact for those seeking mentorship to connect with those willing to provide it, ideally working in the same language or the same specialization. But for this to work, we need mentors!

And keep watching this space: once we have some mentors, we'll be looking for someone for them to mentor!

Are you an established translator willing to pair up with a less experienced colleague seeking mentorship? Let me (Eugenia, eugenia@sokolskayatranslations.com) know your language pair, specialization, and availability!

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?

CONTACT THE EDITORS AT THE ADDRESSES ON THE MASTHEAD.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

Thursday, October 25, 2019

Palm Springs Convention Center, Palm Springs, CA

Ekaterina Howard, Administrator

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya, Assistant Administrator

1. Call to order

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya, Assistant Administrator, called the meeting to order. Outgoing Administrator Ekaterina Howard was not in attendance at the conference.

2. Acceptance of agenda

3. Approval of 2018 minutes

The agenda was accepted. The 2018 minutes, previously published in *SlavFile* and available at <http://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SlavFile-2019-1-Winter.pdf>, page 4, were approved.

4. Installation of New Officers and Introduction

Certificates of recognition for service to the SLD were presented to Eugenia, the outgoing Assistant Administrator, and Ekaterina Howard, the outgoing administrator. Eugenia accepted the certificate on Ekaterina's behalf and, representing the entire SLD community, expressed gratitude for her efforts.

Eugenia pointed out several of the upcoming SLD conference sessions: two by the Greiss lecturer, Boris Dralyuk, and one by Shelley Fairweather-Vega. She noted that we need volunteers to review the conference sessions for *SlavFile*.

5. SLD Overview for 2019

SLD's 2019 activities were summarized as follows:

- *SlavFile*—Nora Favorov reported that the editorial board continues to aim for four issues per year, though in 2019 the summer and fall issues were combined. The next issue is expected to come out in January or February. Nora solicited reviewers for any Slavic-related conference sessions as well as first-time attendees to contribute an article describing their conference experience. She indicated that *SlavFile* is always seeking contributions relating to any Slavic or post-Soviet language, anything from an article or translator/interpreter profile to a glossary. She noted that contributing provides increased visibility to the author, and emphasized that all articles are edited, so non-native English speakers need not hesitate to submit an article. The contact information for the editors can be found on the *SlavFile* masthead.

- *Blog*—Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya remains the blog editor, but is looking for someone to take over. The blog is not very active and mostly contains administrative posts. She polled the audience to determine how many knew we have a blog, whether they would like to see it continue, and whether they had suggestions for articles.
- *Website*—Eugenia reports that the *SlavFile* archive on the website dates back to 1999. The site now includes a podcast page with links to the various episodes.
- *Social media*:
 - *Facebook group*—Anna Livermore curates this group; it is a convenient place to post news of immediate interest to members, such as events.
 - *Twitter feed*—Ekaterina Howard was managing the Twitter account, but is stepping down. We need a volunteer to take it over.
 - *LinkedIn*—There is an SLD LinkedIn group.
 - *Listserv*—Russian and South Slavic listservs run on Google groups.
- *International outreach*—Tom Fennell reports that he has reached out to international conference attendees to welcome them and to invite them



New SLD Administrator Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya receives her ATA Certificate of Recognition from incoming Assistant Administrator Steven McGrath. PHOTO: Nora Favorov

to the SLD meeting. He asked that if any SLD member is planning to attend a T&I event outside the US, to please let him know.

- *Podcast*—Veronika Demichelis reported that the podcast has been active for nearly two years, and there have been 18 podcast episodes. The episodes have been listened to more than 100 times, and not just by SLD members. It has been getting easier to find podcast guests. Veronika will be stepping down from this position and would like to train a volunteer. The volunteer will learn sound recording and editing techniques.
- *Proofreading pool*—Eugenia reports that the proofreading pool, established by Viktoriya Baum, has had no activity and will be discontinued.
- *ATA certification exam practice group*—Eugenia reports that the practice group continues to operate, though it has fewer participants, since many of the earlier participants have passed the ATA Certification Exam. ATA-certified reviewers are being sought to help manage the group. Both Maria Guzenko, who manages the Eng>Rus channel, and Eugenia, who manages the Rus>Eng channel, would like to step down and hand off the channels to replacement managers.
- *Webinars*—Eugenia reports that Elena Bogdanovich-Werner was going to offer a language-specific webinar but had to cancel because of a medical issue. She is hoping to try again in the near future. Veronika suggested using Zoom as the webinar platform instead of the existing ATA platform. Larry Bogoslaw indicated that the ATA was also exploring Zoom and had just tried it out and liked it.

5. New business for 2019

- *Volunteers needed*—Eugenia noted that for the coming year the SLD has a number of positions being vacated and requires new volunteers for podcast host, Twitter host, webinar help, and conference newcomer lunch organizer.
- *Future conference presentations*—Eugenia solicited suggestions for future conference presentations, to which the membership responded as follows.
 - *Distinguished speaker (the Greiss lecturer)*—Nora indicated that the distinguished speaker should plan to provide two separate presentations and should be someone who is not an ATA member and does not come to the conference otherwise. Geographic proximity to the conference location is a plus, since it

decreases travel costs. Robert Chandler, a British Rus>Eng literary translator, has been suggested, though that would make two years in a row that we have had a Russian literary translator as the distinguished speaker. Nora noted that we can combine forces with other divisions for our distinguished speakers. Distinguished speaker suggestions should be sent to Nora at norafavorov@gmail.com.

- *Regular conference sessions*—Eugenia noted that the session proposal forms will be available online by February 1. Members should feel free to contact the division administrators with questions about submitting a conference session proposal.
- *Mentoring program*—Eugenia inquired as to whether there was interest in starting up an SLD-specific mentoring program. ATA operates an association-wide mentoring program, but it is not language-matched. Several attendees expressed interest.
- *Nominating Committee*—Tom Fennell reported that the Nominating Committee solicited many candidates for the Administrator and Assistant Administrator positions. The committee was particularly diligent about recruiting SLD members who worked in languages other than Russian, but found no willing candidates. Ultimately, the Nominating Committee nominated Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya for Administrator and Steven McGrath for Assistant Administrator, who were both elected by acclamation.

6. Feedback and suggestions from members

- Eugenia solicited additional feedback and suggestions; there were none.
- Larry Bogoslaw announced that he had brought a guitar and lyrics, and invited members to join in for an informal Slavic singalong that evening. [The poolside singalong was well attended and an enjoyable event.]

7. Introduction of new members

Conference newcomers were invited to introduce themselves, and several did so.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

—Minutes taken by Jennifer Guernsey

HARRY POTTER AND THE TRIAL OF MARIA SPIVAK

Presented by Vladimir Reznikov

Reviewed by Peter Ward

Justice was served at ATA60 in Palm Springs, California, this year, when the original and deft young translator Vladimir Reznikov called upon his knowledge of language, the law, and magic itself to posthumously defend the late Maria Spivak from internet slander during his “Harry Potter Analysis” presentation. Spivak, who is famous in Russia for her translations of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, died in 2018. On the morning of ATA60’s final day, just when attendees were starting to let their guard down, Lord Voldemort himself slithered into Vladimir’s presentation and demanded an audience to perform the three forbidden curses on an astute young woman he identified as Maria Spivak. Voldemort stunned the audience with the assertion that he had resurrected Spivak from the dead just to criticize her translations in person.



Ministry of Magic judge José González courageously intervenes in a duel between Lords Voldemort (Peter Ward, right) and Vladimir Reznikov (left) as the resurrected Maria Spivak (Marina Krukovich) watches approvingly.

PHOTO: Vladimir Reznikov

The Dark Lord’s spiteful behavior deserves a bit of context. Evidently, he is not a stranger to the Russian internet, where a trend has developed in recent years of dismissing Maria Spivak’s translations of the famous *Harry Potter* books in favor of the versions published by ROSMAN Publishing House. In his presentation, Vladimir, aka Lord Vladimir, explained how, according to Russian copyright law, only one translation of a given work can be sold at a time. Spivak’s translation supplanted ROSMAN’s, thus stirring the cauldron. Indeed, the jury is still out in Russia on the question of whose translations are stronger, and the debate has degenerated into a slanderous critique of Ms. Spivak’s work from internet trolls of dubious translation expertise. Ms. Spivak has endured some of the worst insults a translator can face, including endless criticism that she was unfaithful to the original English. He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named clearly felt strongly about this issue, as it has some personal significance for him, and he decided it was too bad that Ms. Spivak was already translating in another dimension, so to speak. He had ripped a portal in spacetime and brought her back to life just to punish her.

But Lord Vladimir had other plans. Being a graduate of Ravenclaw House, an avid reader of the *Harry Potter* series, and a student of the different Russian translations, he stepped in to defend Ms. Spivak from the Dark Lord’s unjust attack. With some persuasion and support from his audience, he was able to

negotiate a proper trial for Ms. Spivak, give the quality of her work a fair evaluation, and rein in this out-of-control debate. In an instant, the audience became the jury, a real judge from the Ministry of Magic (José González) teleported in, Lord Voldemort volunteered to be the prosecutor, and Lord Vladimir stepped in as the defense attorney. An astounding trial—the likes of which the ATA has never seen—ensued. The jury itself narrowly avoided being cursed by the Dark Lord on several occasions when it expressed outrage at his claims.

What had been an unassuming and undercaffeinated Saturday morning presentation became an exciting trial scene in which a translator’s career and reputation were at stake. The Dark Lord began by making a number of biting accusations. He repeated the unfounded arguments of the internet trolls, but Spivak withstood this onslaught with newfound strength now that she had the support of her defense counsel. Lord Voldemort’s arguments eventually faltered as the defense deftly countered each one. He showed the courtroom how, when Maria Spivak’s translations were closely analyzed, there was every reason to believe that they were just as impressive as, if not superior to, their ROSMAN counterparts. The jury began to realize how tragic it really is that this great translator has been so harshly criticized instead of memorialized.

Voldemort started by attacking Spivak’s renditions of names, like Hagrid (*Озпуд*) and Dumbledore

(Думблдор), calling them unfaithful to how these names sound in the original English. He argued that her version of “Severus Snape” (Зломеус Злей) made him sound too evil, instead of severe, as the English suggests, because of the root зло (“evil”) that begins each name. But Lord Vladimir shot back, pointing out the hidden root meaning “gold” (золото) in Зломеус, which adds an appropriate level of complexity to this complicated character’s name. He also defended Spivak’s handling of Hagrid’s and Dumbledore’s names, calling the Dark Lord’s arguments unsubstantiated, as there is no translation law mandating that all names should phonetically match their source versions.

Ms. Spivak’s defense then went on the offensive and addressed her translation of the Dark Lord’s own name, Voldemort. He showed the court how Spivak’s translation is more faithful to the original than the ROSMAN version, because it more closely matches an anagram used by Rowling to describe the origins of the name. The character’s real name, Tom Marvolo Riddle, can be rearranged to spell “I am Lord Voldemort” in the English original, and Spivak captured this tricky nuance perfectly in her translation Том Ярволо Реддль – Я Лорд Вольдеморт. The Dark Lord’s response to this embarrassing argument about his own name was to threaten the jury and insist that Lord Vladimir could never win. His overconfident approach failed to persuade the jury.

Now the defense really had the courtroom’s attention. Lord Vladimir conjured a presentation of slides that displayed passage after passage of the Spivak and ROSMAN translations side by side. He skillfully sight-read and meticulously analyzed each one to prove to the jury that Spivak’s translations were more faithful to the source in style and meaning. Finally, after this dizzying display of intellect, which left the Dark Lord surprisingly speechless (he is not used to being argued with), Lord Vladimir teleported an expert witness into the courtroom: ATA-Certified Russian Translator and SLD Assistant Administrator Steven McGrath. After establishing his expertise before the court, the defense asked Mr. McGrath to compare various passages and assess the quality of Spivak’s work, which he quickly and firmly agreed was top notch. The Dark Lord had not prepared to bring any witnesses, and by this point in the trial had resorted to threatening the jury and bragging like a schoolyard bully.

After his final display of argumentative prowess, Lord Vladimir rested his case, and it was time for the jury to make a decision. By now they were thoroughly spooked by Lord Voldemort’s constant threats and deranged arguments, and they were just ready to clear Maria Spivak’s name and get out of there. But there was one more request for the court. In light of Ms.

Spivak’s unique situation (being deceased), the defense asked the court to consider a third ruling so that her posthumous reputation could be graced with new appreciation. Besides *innocent* and *guilty* verdicts, the court was asked to also consider finding Spivak *guilty of an awesome translation and to be commended*. The judge accepted this petition and moved to allow the jury to select from three possible verdicts.

Lord Voldemort, Lord Vladimir, and Maria Spivak left the room while the jury deliberated. In no time, they were called back, and the judge announced a verdict of *guilty of an awesome translation and to be commended*. Maria Spivak avoided the three forbidden curses, and her name was officially cleared by a magical court of translation law and, more importantly, by the ATA and SLD community of translators. The Dark Lord’s authority fizzled when he witnessed the power of professional consensus, and he was forced to flee the courtroom. Indeed, ATA60 was one for the record books after this dramatic display of magic, debate, and translation skill. Despite multiple lucrative offers from deceased translators to defend their works, Lord Vladimir has decided not to embark on a new legal career. He told the press after the trial, that he was obliged to follow his passion for words and languages, but that he is always ready to defend the merits of any translator who has been unjustly accused (as long as they share his language pairs, of course).

So vivacious and vigorous was the defense that Maria Spivak found herself full of life again, added but one letter to her first name, and was reincarnated as Marina Krukovich, an elegant Russian translator and court interpreter from New Zealand. Needless to say, she will now start reading the *Harry Potter* books for the first time this lifetime. José González, an able English-Spanish translator and talented musician, had stepped in as the Ministry of Magic judge and wielded his wand with the greatest of tact. Lord Voldemort has since had an epiphany, realizing the grave error of his ways. Instead of sowing evil, wreaking havoc and instigating strife, he has chosen to bring understanding, communication, and order to this world by becoming a Russian-English translator. He decided to thank Lord Vladimir for this enlightening experience by writing this review.

Peter Ward is a Russian linguist interested in improving communication between the English and Russian speaking worlds. He holds a master’s degree in Russian, East European and Eurasian studies from the University of Oregon, where his research focused on the potential for humanitarian cooperation between Russia and the United States. Peter, who currently resides and works in Corvallis, Oregon, has lived and worked in Russia for much of his life and has traveled extensively throughout Eastern Europe. He can be reached at peter@translatemir.com

SOME NEW YEAR'S REFLECTIONS, OR MY LIFE IN TRANSLATION

Natalie Shahova

translated by Nora Seligman Favorov

The first book I translated, *The New Priesthood: British Television Today* by Joan Bakewell and Nicholas Garnham, came to me through a parental connection—the translation was for internal use by the staff of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio, where my father worked as a radio journalist. An excerpt was published a few years later as part of an anthology titled «40 мнений о телевидении» (*Forty Opinions about Television*). Getting my hands on a copy of the original wasn't easy: I tried to use interlibrary loan at my university, but the library of Moscow State's Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics turned me down flat, because what possible use could a math student have for religious literature like *The New Priesthood*?

The second book I translated, *Shock Waves and Man* («Ударные волны и человек») by I.I. Glass, was a joint effort with my mother. Because my daughter, Saule Tuganbaeva, was too impatient to wait for her due date, I had to finish the translation in the maternity hospital. There were no laptops back then, so I brought along the manuscript in the form of a stack of A4-sized graph paper. The Russian translation was published by Mir in 1977.

After *Shock Waves*, I took a long hiatus from translation to write and defend my dissertation on group theory (from the realm of abstract algebra) and teach computer science at Moscow's Institute of Radio Engineering, Electronics, and Automation.

My return to translation came in 1993 with the book *SADT: Structured Analysis and Design Technique* («Методология структурного анализа и проектирования SADT») by David A. Marca and Clement L. McGowan. But then I wanted to try my hand at literary translation. The Eksmo publishing house would only trust me with two works of women's literature, the mysteries *Double Jeopardy* by Linda Randall Wisdom and *Caprice* by Fayrene Preston. As is often the case, the Russian translations had been assigned completely different titles, which caused problems with *Double Jeopardy*. Instead of giving me the usual free copies, the publisher just gave me money to purchase the work myself. The name given to *Double Jeopardy*—«Коварство и любовь»— was



identical to the Russian title of a play by Friedrich von Schiller (*Intrigue and Love*), which caused a lot of confusion, with bookstores offering me eighteenth-century *Sturm und Drang* rather than the contemporary detective novel I needed.

Later I returned to technical and popular science translations. *The Workflow Imperative* by Thomas M. Koulopoulos («Необходимость Workflow», 2000) was shortly followed by my biggest “splash”: Bill Gates' *Business @ The Speed of Thought*

(«Бизнес со скоростью мысли»). It was a rush job (I only had about three months), because the translation originally commissioned was riddled with mistakes and had to be discarded and redone from scratch (for example, “I was pondering how the digital age will fundamentally alter business” was translated as “я размышлял над тем, как физический возраст влияет на деловой статус” or, in back translation “I was pondering how people's physical age affects their business status”). Because of the rush, there were three other translators on the project: Irina Kudryashova, Vasiliy Saveliev, and Eugene Podolnyi. I was the one who had to turn the resulting gumbo into a cohesive text. The translation was a huge success (this was Bill Gates, after all!) and went into numerous printings. I even received phone calls from readers all over Russia, including one from a high-ranking church official, who objected to some of the author's points on religious grounds.

My translation of *Just for Fun* («Ради удовольствия») by Linus Torvalds came out in 2002. It was edited by Eugene Radchenko and Saule Tuganbaeva (in this case my daughter accelerated the process, rather than slowed it down).

Translating *Just for Fun* was made particularly, well, fun by my interactions with Torvalds, whose patient answers to my endless emailed questions would be in my inbox the morning after I sent them. For example, he saved me a lot of anguish by telling me that a particularly baffling phrase was part of a private joke with a childhood friend that, even in the original, would be incomprehensible to any other anglophone reader.



The Russian translation of *Every Man Should Try*, an autobiography by Jeremy Stone, the longtime president of the Federation of American Scientists and a longtime friend of our family (he expressed pride in knowing five generations of us, from my grandmother to my granddaughter), came out in 2004 as «Попытаться должен каждый». In addition to me, it was translated by my son Diar Tuganbaev and his wife Mariana Skuratovska, and this translation was also edited by Saule. This same family collective translated Douglas Robinson's *Becoming a Translator* («Как стать переводчиком»).



Next came my personal favorite: Lynne Truss's renowned *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (shortlisted for The Unicorn and the Lion award for the best translation of British literature into Russian). The original had been given to me by Saule with the words: «Это написала такая же чокнутая, как ты» (“This woman is as crazy as you are”). I had to keep up the reputation. The translation came out under the title «Казнить нельзя помиловать» (roughly “Execute, no mercy” or “Execute no, mercy”), and my foreword was, for some reason, reprinted in a Chelyabinsk newspaper. Even the austere denizens of Chelyabinsk seem to have been moved by my passion for punctuation. (The rest of Russia likes to poke fun at the people of Chelyabinsk, a city just east of the Urals, for their dourness.)

Eats, Shoots & Leaves marked the beginning of my collaboration with the translator Eugenia Kanishcheva, who edits my work so masterfully that I cringe at the thought of her ever giving up this task.

In recent years, I have been alternating between two publishers: Corpus and Colibri. The former emphasizes economics, while the latter has been giving me books on popular linguistics, resulting in the following series: *Grand Pursuit* by Sylvia Nasar («Путь к великой цели», translated in collaboration with Andrei Satunin and edited by Ilya Faybisovich, with Konstantin Sonin serving as scientific consultant, Corpus, 2013); *Lingo: A Language Spotter's Guide to Europe* by Gaston Dorren («Лингво. Языковой пейзаж Европы», Colibri, 2016); *A Beautiful Mind* by Sylvia Nasar («Игры разума», translated in collaboration with Anna Arakelova and Mariana Skuratovska, Corpus, 2016); *How to Speak Any Language Fluently* by Alex Rawlings («Как заговорить на любом языке»,

Colibri, 2018); *The Rise and Fall of Nations* by Ruchir Sharma («Взлеты и падения государств», Colibri, 2018); and *Is That a Fish in Your Ear* by David Bellos («Что за рыбка в вашем ухе?», Colibri, 2019)—all improved by the able editorial hand of Eugenia Kanishcheva.

Yesterday I submitted the final page proofs of *Babel* by Gaston Dorren. The translation (again, edited by Eugenia Kanishcheva), should come out this winter (if we can call what's happening in Moscow “winter”!). Currently, Eugenia is poring over my latest translation, whose working title is «Находки перевода» (*Found in Translation* by Nataly Kelly and Jost Zetzsche). This is also scheduled to be published in 2020.

In Russia, there is now a much greater appreciation of the role of the translator than when I first entered this profession. While in the past the translator's name was (almost always) cited on an inside page, it was never mentioned in reviews or other informal descriptions. Now, it (often) appears on publishers' websites and in the listings of on-line booksellers, in reviews by professional critics (sometimes), and (once in a while) in reader reviews. Of course, 99 percent of reviews follow the basic clueless formula of “John Doe writes in a lively colloquial style,” ignoring the fact that John Doe could not possibly have produced a “lively colloquial style” in Russian. It makes any self-respecting translator want to yell, “It was me, guys! I did it!”

As for audiobooks—forget it! The unfortunate consumer sophisticated enough to want to find a particular translation of, say, *Alice in Wonderland* is out of luck. The translator's name is usually neither on the cover nor anywhere in the recording.

That's it. (According to literary critic Galina Yuzefovich, who also teaches university-level creative writing, this—Ну и вот—is how her students like to end their essays these days, having run out of space for a more meaningful concluding paragraph in fixed-length assignments.)

Natalie Shaha's life is not limited to book translation but rather includes a PhD in math, three kids, seven grandchildren, and almost 30 years as head of the EnRus translation agency. She is also the author of many publications relating to translation. Her article, “Eats, Shoots & Leaves Britain for Russia” appeared in the *Spring 2008* issue of *SlavFile*. Natalie can be reached at translation@enrus.ru.



ATA60: SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION DINNER

Veronika Demichelis

*Ах, Греция! мечта души моей!
Ты сказка нежная, но я к тебе нежней,
Нежней, чем к Гектору, герою, Андромаха.*
— Сергей Есенин

The best part of any ATA conference is seeing old friends and making new ones. This experience is energizing and enriching in so many ways. The ATA 60th Annual Conference in Palm Springs was no exception, and SLD members had many opportunities to get to know one another better and learn from each other's experiences.

On Thursday, October 24, 2019, we met for a wonderful dinner at Greek Islands, a restaurant offering authentic Greek cuisine in the bustling center of Palm Springs. Full disclaimer: I have a soft spot for anything Greek. Not only do my first and last names have Greek roots, but my husband and I also spent an unforgettable honeymoon in the Greek islands. So, I, for one, really looked forward to our dinner, not only for culinary and social reasons, but also for nostalgic ones.

Our lively group was seated in the outdoor area of the restaurant, where we enjoyed the twinkly lights decorating the greenery and music from a nearby outdoor festival. Great conversations flowed throughout the evening, as we learned more about each other's experiences and background and indulged in Greek cuisine.

We enjoyed the Greek salad, tzatziki, hummus, and eggplant spread with pita bread, chicken, lamb, and vegetable skewers, and a selection of mouthwatering desserts. The restaurant staff announced each dish with truly Greek flair, and kindly offered us some homemade limoncello as we waited for our checks.

I truly enjoyed this evening with our SLD group and look forward to our next meeting in Boston during ATA61!

Veronika Demichelis is an ATA-certified English-into-Russian translator based in Houston, TX. She specializes in localization, linguistic testing, and translation of documents related to corporate communication, human resources, and sustainable development. She is a board member of Houston Interpreters and Translators Association and an adjunct professor in the Translation and Interpretation program at Houston Community College. She can be reached at veronika@veronikademichelis.com.



One half of the long table of SLD members sharing their personal and professional experiences over a delicious Greek dinner.
PHOTO: Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya

THE SINGALONG IS BACK!

Nostalgia, talent, the sultry October air of a Palm Springs evening, along with a bit of planning and foresight, conspired to make the revival of an SLD tradition a success. On Thursday night, after the SLD banquet, a group of division members gathered poolside to sing some Russian campfire classics: «Тонкая рябина», «Калинка», «Подмосковные вечера», «Песенка о капитане», «Катюша»...and many others, including one Odessa song («С одесского кичмана...») mentioned in Boris Dralyuk's talk earlier that day: "It's Got Flavor: Translating Odessa." Thanks to Larry Bogoslaw for bringing along his guitar, his brilliant (and optimistic) translation of «Песенка о капитане» (which he also performed at the Literary Division's After Hours Café to thunderous applause). Thanks are also due to our multitalented SLD Administrator, Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya, whose lovely singing voice, guitar-playing abilities, and impressive repertoire greatly enhanced the event, and to first-time ATA Annual Conference attendee Armen Ayvazyan, who also borrowed Larry's guitar to play a few old favorites with great panache. The SLD singalong is back! Translators working in other Slavic Languages are encouraged to join in the organization of this event.

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PHOTO: Nora Favorov

Among those enjoying the Singalong were (left to right) Elana Pick, incoming SLD Assistant Administrator Steven McGrath, and Armen Ayvazyan, who performed some old favorites with great panache (above).



PHOTO: Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya

Pictured left to right are Ryan Green, Jen Guernsey, John Riedl, and Larry Bogoslaw.

“IT’S GOT FLAVOR”: TRANSLATING ODESSA

Presented by Boris Dralyuk

Reviewed by Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya

As someone who grew up speaking Russian, and with parents who were fans of the Odessan comedian Mikhail Zhvanetsky, I’ve been exposed to Odessan culture, lore, humor, and language throughout my life, often without knowing it. I knew that Odessa had a reputation as distinctive, but no one ever explained to me what set it apart. That’s why I was excited to see that this year’s Greiss lecturer, Boris Dralyuk, an Odessa native, was giving a session on “translating Odessa.” Finally, my questions would be answered!



Another major component of Odessan culture is how it glorifies its own criminal underworld: Jewish gangsters, Greek smugglers, clever thieves of all cultures. Boris found translating the literature of this world, from Isaac Babel’s *Odessa Stories* (Pushkin Press, 2018) to Odessan songs beloved across the Soviet Union, to be some of his most gratifying translation work. It allowed him to bring into English a world that had made him fall back in love with the Russian language, making use of another literature that he adored as a kid: the fictionalized world of New York gangsters.

So, what is “Odessan”? To illustrate the mixture of languages that went into its creation, Boris cited a tongue-in-cheek quote from Vlas Doroshevich: “... Odessan language, like a sausage, is stuffed with languages from around the world, prepared in the Greek manner but with a Polish sauce. And with all that, Odessans will assure you that they speak Russian.”¹ He went on to point out that the quote is from 1895, and as such leaves out the two most important ingredients in Odessan: Yiddish and Ukrainian, the former belonging to a marginalized group of people and the latter being formally outlawed.

During the session, Boris read us a snippet from his translation of *Odessa Stories*, where the Odessan criminals sounded like they would be right at home in New York, even though some choices made were a nod to the peculiarities of Odessan speech, such as repeating “had” in a playful way to evoke the overuse of “иметь.” I was curious as to how Boris would address potential criticism that the translation made the Russians too American, but he had an answer ready to my unasked question: the language of the New York criminal world had come under many of the same influences as Odessa and was even spoken by some of the same people, as Odessans emigrated to the US in the early 20th century.

Of course, the extent to which the resulting mixture differs from more mainstream Russian can vary significantly. Sometimes Odessan can sound like a completely unintelligible foreign language, as with the Odessan rendition of “what happened?” Boris gave that was so far removed from Russian that I could neither accurately write it down then nor recreate it now (Boris tells us the phrase is “Вус трапылось?”—eds.). More often, however, it is understandable but playful, marked by loanwords and calques, a “creative” use of prepositions (mostly за), and an overuse of the verb *иметь* (apparently a German influence). This last distinctive feature was a particular surprise, because, while I don’t claim to have any Odessan heritage, I quite naturally say, “я имею тебе что-то сказать” (“I have something to say to you”). Maybe it’s all the Zhvanetsky my parents exposed me to! Or perhaps it’s evidence of how Odessan has quietly permeated Russian culture and influenced non-Odessans’ speech.

However, as we looked at a few Odessan songs Boris had translated (see page 17 for a sample), it was apparent that this foreign culture had not been completely domesticated. For example, the Yiddish *toches* that appears in his “A Joint Sprang Up on Deribasovskaya Street” had been left in italics and was given in a less familiar spelling (although one that English has also borrowed).

Boris’ presentation of his native culture was informative, witty, and engaging. An audience member behind me said at the end of the session that it was “the fastest that 50 minutes have ever gone by at the conference”—that’s how engrossed we all were. I can’t say that I came out of the session with all of my questions about Odessa answered, but I certainly got a taste of its flavor and the understanding that there was no simple answer to the question, “what is Odessan?”

¹ Таков этот одесский язык, как колбаса, начинённый языками всего мира, приготовленный по-гречески, но с польским соусом. И одесситы при всём этом уверяют, будто они говорят «порусски». Found at [https://ru.wikiquote.org/wiki/Одесский_язык_\(Дорошевич\)](https://ru.wikiquote.org/wiki/Одесский_язык_(Дорошевич)).

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya translates from Russian to English, and occasionally from French, focusing on legal and financial texts. She is the current SLD Administrator.

THE 2019 SUSANA GREISS LECTURE: “A GUIDED JOURNEY: THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP”

Presented by Boris Dralyuk

Reviewed by Ryan Green

As someone who is relatively new to the translation sphere and a first-time attendee of the ATA Annual Conference, which this year took place in lovely Southern California, I have sensed a thirst for mentorship not only in myself, but also in other newcomers to translation around me. We can spend long days (or nights) combing through our work again and again in order to produce something we deem perfect, only to be left without feedback on how well we’re doing. We love language and we want someone to pick on us, someone to argue semantics with, someone to give us their two cents on our work. We dream of intellectual guidance that will push us down this or that career path.

The formation of a translator through mentorship was the topic of a session by this year’s Greiss speaker, Boris Dralyuk, whose collection of hats includes those of accomplished literary translator from Russian and Executive Editor of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Dralyuk’s talk, “A Guided Journey: The Importance of Mentorship,” covered how a few key people in his life shaped his development from an amateur translator of Russian poetry to where he is now, speaking at the biggest translation conference in the country.

Dralyuk, a native of Odessa, began his journey as a literary translator when his mother gave him poetry by Akhmatova and Pasternak in an attempt to preserve his Russian after the family moved to the United States. His mother figured that, while young Boris might not understand everything written on the page, the meter would help him remember the correct stress in a language he now read more broadly than he spoke. He admits that, in fact, he didn’t understand a good 80 percent of what he read back then. But while immersing himself in the work of some of Russia’s greatest poets, he developed a strong desire to render these verses into English, the language of his new country, and thus turned to the translation of poetry. Young Boris carried his translated verses around in a folder, a quirk that one day caught the attention of his English teacher. While this teacher was quick to offer criticism of Boris’s work (“too metrical,” he said), Boris nonetheless considers this teacher to be his first mentor.

Dralyuk then met his next mentor, Michael Henry Heim, as a freshman at UCLA. He visited Heim on a regular basis, bothering him during his office hours

and combing through translations with him. Mentorship number three has been with British poet and literary translator Robert Chandler, whom Dralyuk meets a few times a year in London.

The final “mentorship” Dralyuk mentioned was a collection of poetry done with a group of translators that included Robert Chandler. Over the course of this project, he said, they tweaked and edited each other’s work to a degree that, although every poem featured a single byline, each translation was the product of an editorial chain reaction that made it hard to pinpoint what wordings were whose! I have always found the idea of collaboration in translation fascinating, but I never imagined collaboration as an act of mentorship.

Toward the beginning of his lecture, Dralyuk described translation as “an act of extreme generosity,” that is, bringing the treasures of one culture to readers who do not understand that language. He shared stories of his physical journey from the post-Soviet world to the United States, and the ensuing mental journey that continues to this day through the act of translating works from Russian to English. I consider this a perfect example of this extreme generosity. In his previous talk, which was on the peculiarities of Odessan Russian, he was certainly generous enough to share with us the musicality and distinctive character of his native dialect.

Most importantly, Dralyuk says, a mentor should never look down on a mentee. Mentorship is an act of lifting up, never bringing down. Mentors, he mentioned, are not perfect. Any feedback offered by a mentor should be viewed through a critical lens, since, in the end, the work is not the mentor’s—it’s the mentee’s.

The editors of *SlavFile* are pleased to point out that Dralyuk’s mentor Michael Henry Heim was the Slavic Languages Division’s 2002 Greiss Lecturer—a heartening example of a past lecturer helping to cultivate a new generation of distinguished speakers for our division.

Ryan Green has been translating for four years, primarily Russian to English, as well as Polish to English. He is currently pursuing a Master’s in Translation from Kent State University. He may be reached at rgreen28@kent.edu.



Ryan Green

One Odessan Song from the “It’s Got Flavor” Handout

На Дерibasовской открылася пивная

На Дерibasовской открылася пивная,
Там собиралася вся компания блатная.
Там были девочки Маруся, Вера, Рая,
И с ними Костя, Костя Шмаровоз.

Три полудевочки и один роскошный мальчик,
Который ездил побираться в город Нальчик,
И возвращался на машине марки Форда
И шил костюмы элегантней, чем у лорда.

Но вот вошла в пивную Роза-молдаванка,
Она была собой прелестна, как вакханка.
И к ней подсел её всегдашний попутчик
И спутник жизни Костя Шмаровоз.

Держась за тохес, как за ручку от трамвая,
Он говорил: — Ах, моя Роза дорогая,
Я вас прошу, нет, я вас просто умоляю
Мне подарить последнее танго.

Но тут Арончик пригласил её на танец.
Он был тогда для нас совсем как иностранец.
Он пригласил её галантерейно очень
И посмотрел на Шмаровоза между прочим.

Хоть танцевать уж Роза больше не хотела,
Она и так уже порядочно вспотела,
Лишь улыбнулась в ответ красотка Роза,
И засверкала морда Кости Шмаровоза.

Сказал Арону в изысканной манере:
— Я б вам советовал пришвартоваться к Вере,
Чтоб я в дальнейшем не обидел вашу маму, —
И вышел прочь, надвинув белую панаму.

Услышал реплику маркёр известный Моня,
Об чей хребет сломали кий в кафе Фанкони,
Побочный сын мадам Алешкер, тети Песи,
Известной бандерши в красавице Одессе.

Он подошел к нему походкой пеликана,
Он вынул ножик из жилетного кармана
И так сказал ему, как говорят поэты:
— Я вам советую беречь свои портреты.

Но наш Арончик был натурой очень пылкой,
Он вдарил Мончика по кумполу бутылкой,
Официанту засадили в тохес вилкой,
И началось тогда прощальное танго.

На Аргентину это было не похоже,
Когда прохожему заехали по роже,
А из пивной нас выбросили разом —
Приятель с шишкой, я с синяком под глазом.

На Дерibasовской закрылася пивная.
Куда девалася компания блатная?
Где наши девочки, Маруся, Роза, Рая,
И с ними Костя, Костя Шмаровоз?

1920-e

A Joint Sprang Up on Deribasovskaya Street

A joint sprang up on Deribasovskaya Street
where all Odessa’s thieves and crooks would meet.
You’d see Marúsya, Véra, Ráya there for sure,
accompanied by Kóstya the Procurer —

three demi-virgins and a handsome-looking joe,
who’d travel out of town to beg for dough,
returning to Odessa in a Ford,
sporting a suit as natty as a lord’s.

Well, Róza from the slums came in one night,
looking as lovely as an ancient sybarite,
and Kostya, Roza’s faithful, life-long mate,
approached her when the hour was getting late.

Gripping her *toches* like a handle in a tram,
he said: “My darling Roza, little lamb,
I ask you kindly — no, I simply beg you
to join me on the floor for one last tango.”

But then Arónchik came and asked Roza to dance.
To us, he might as well have been from France.
His invitation was as gallant as all hell —
and the Procurer got a look from him as well...

Although our Roza didn’t care to dance no more
(she was already plenty sweaty from before),
she glanced up at Aronchik and smiled back —
well, Kostya the Procurer blew his stack.

He spoke to Aron in a manner most refined:
“You’d better moor at Vera’s dock, if you don’t mind —
lest your poor mother come to harm some day,”
then donned his Panama straw hat and walked away.

All this was heard by billiard-marker Mónya,
whose spine had snapped a cue once at Fanconi’s —
he was the bastard son of Auntie Pénya,
a famous madam in our beautiful Odessa.

He swaggered over like a pelican,
waving a flickblade like a little fan,
and spoke to Aron as the poets do:
“I’d keep my portraits safe, if I were you.”

But our Aronchik got all fired up
and smashed a bottle over Mónchik’s *kop*.
They poked the waiter in the *toches* with a fork
and then the farewell tango was uncorked.

No, none of this looked much like Buenos Aires,
bystanders getting punched and all the *tsuris*.
They tossed us out, we landed on our rumps —
me with a shiner and my buddy with a lump.

A beer joint closed on Deribasovskaya Street.
Where do Odessa’s thieves and crooks now meet?
Where are our girls — Marusya, Raya, Roza —
and Kostya the Procurer? No one knows...

1920s

Translated by Boris Dralyuk

A First-Time Attendee's Steps Into the Beehive of ATA60

Liliya Chernous

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands,
that goes to his head.*

*If you talk to him in his language,
that goes to his heart.*

—Nelson Mandela

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to speak English. Why English, you may ask? I grew up hearing English songs on the radio and on my older siblings' tape player and English-language Christian hymns, pop music, and news from Voice of America broadcasts. Of course, all of us listened to these things secretly, since anything that came from the West, especially from United States, was condemned by officials. This was the Cold War era, after all.

Having been born in a diverse city in southeastern Ukraine, I learned several languages while playing with other children. To be honest, I do not remember how I learned Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Polish. In school, I expected to be placed in English class. I was looking forward to hearing the homeroom teacher say my name and starting the next day learning how to use my tongue to make the strangest sounds – “th” or “w” or even “r.” This moment never came because the school principal had learned that my family and I had been listening to Voice of America. That day I finally realized that the KGB knew everything about me!

Instead of English class, I was placed in French class and began to produce nasal sounds. I hated French class, and very often I would run away to English class and hide behind the other students. Sometimes the English teacher would allow me to stay, but most of the time I was kicked out. I vowed that I would learn English no matter what!

After my graduation in 1986, I could not gain admittance to any university because the KGB knew somehow that I was a “dangerous” person. I was marked as a “criminal” for listening to the “voice of the enemy,” in addition to being Christian, which was against the entire Communist agenda. Sadly, I was an outsider in my own country, almost like a foreigner. After graduating college with a major in nursing, I returned to my passion—actively learning English—as well as working hard in a hospital critical care department.

My husband, three little kiddos, and I came to the United States as refugees in 1997. By this time, I spoke

some English and was even able to assist new immigrants with simple interpreting services. Soon after, I immersed myself in learning, reading, and listening to the English language. I could hardly believe that my dream had come true. The principal of one of the local schools heard that I was helping newcomers enroll in schools and asked me to come work as an ESL Teacher Assistant. I told the principal that I did not have any training as a teacher, but worst of all was the fact that I had no computer at home. I was ashamed to tell the principal that I did not know how to use one. The principal said, “Just come as you are, and we will provide training for you and will teach you how to use a computer.” My journey began! I was shocked! It took me a couple of years to gain the confidence to interpret and later to be a translator from Russian and Ukrainian.

I never thought that I would become an interpreter and a translator. It is a dream come true that I can hardly believe to this day (somebody, please, pinch me!). An interpreting opportunity came to me amid the need to help other refugees in late 1998, when some hospitable people in North Carolina (where we live) were unexpectedly accepting new families in the valley of Asheville.

As a very active mother of three children, running around between my children's school and my job as a case manager for the World Relief resettlement agency, I found American friends who helped me practice my conversational skills, gave me passages in different genres to read so I could improve my comprehension, and provided suggestions on how to be a more successful interpreter. I am thankful for all the American friends in my life. I believe it was their influence that gave me, in addition to my work as a medical interpreter and translator, the strong desire to learn more so as to be better at my job as a social worker and case manager. Something came to life within me, and I decided that I had to go back to school to earn a degree in social work. In 2014, I graduated from college with a degree in Human Technology Social Service. I also participated in several medical training programs in North Carolina.



For the past five years, I have been freelancing for different schools and practices. In January 2019, I began to work as the office administrator for the Western Carolina Interpreter Network and as a medical/social work interpreter for medical practices as a contractor. As a medical interpreter, I strive to maintain professionalism, because I believe in the mission of overcoming language obstacles to help clients access services.

I gladly signed up to attend the 2019 ATA Annual Conference. I was ready to bring my skills to the next level and boost my confidence as a professional interpreter. I was ready to be challenged by new ideas and learn from other interpreters and translators.

So, there I was in Palm Springs! The beauty of the arid mountains early in the morning amazed me during my walk to the Convention Center. Everything was different for me. It seemed that I was in another country. When I finally reached the Convention Center and registered as a first-time attendee, I understood that this was a time for me to be re-energized and to set some professional goals.

My initial expectations were simple, but realistic. I wanted to be exposed to new kinds of advanced hands-on exercises, to communicate with other translators and interpreters, to understand the approaching challenges posed by artificial intelligence and the prospect of robotic voices doing our job, and to learn ways to survive our struggle against automation by building up my confidence in my interpreting abilities.

In addition, I was eager to meet other Slavic translators and interpreters and to discuss topics in the interpreting field. The conference itself reminded me of a huge beehive with millions of bees inside. Some attendees were busy reuniting with their friends, while groups of interpreters were exchanging tales of their travel experiences, and still others were planning to visit some of the attractions in Palm Springs. I sensed the excitement in the air, and I felt a bit lost in this place.

At the Welcome Celebration, I went to the Slavic Languages Division table to meet new people. Maybe because it was quite late or people were jet-lagged, some Slavic interpreters were standing quietly off to the side in groups. I took advantage of the opportunity to ask them questions and learn something from their experience and knowledge.

Trying to navigate to the sessions I had chosen to attend, I realized that I was about to take another step into the interpreting profession. I appreciated the importance of being a highly professional interpreter and proving to society that we need to have a strong

human voice—not artificial intelligence or quickly and haphazardly trained interpreters. But how? Many are now fearful that the end is near for the human interpreter. I was glad to have an opportunity to talk to speakers before and after their sessions to ask critical questions about AI platforms that could do the job of a human interpreter. Some speakers believed that the technology will replace interpreters and translators entirely very soon. After all of these discussions with speakers and attendees, I felt overwhelmed, and it took me a couple of hours to fall asleep.

The next day was a new day, and I was much happier than the day before. I met other enthusiastic Russian and Ukrainian interpreters during lunchtime, and I had an opportunity to communicate with some of them and find out more about the conference sessions, my colleagues' work experience, effective networking among colleagues, job opportunities, and much more. I appreciated the welcoming attitude of other interpreters from Germany, Mexico, Italy, and China.

I met some awesome Russian and Ukrainian translators as well. Mostly, they specialized in poetry and in fiction and nonfiction books. I was glad that I had a chance to listen to and learn from talented and hardworking translators. I attended the Slavic Languages Division meeting and was able to meet American members working as interpreters from Russian into English. Some of them had lived for a long time in Russia and Ukraine and mastered those two languages impressively. The SLD is an excellent support-system for all Slavic interpreters and translators. I am looking forward to knowing many of its members and learning even more next time!

Now I have an important question to answer. What do I want to do next? For the past two years, I have been translating letters, test instructions, and web pages for the education departments of three counties into Ukrainian. The Ukrainian language is so beautiful and musical. My goal is to be ATA-certified for English into Ukrainian. The stimulating sessions at ATA60 and my interaction with other translators and interpreters led me to a decision: I will pursue more training and plan to take the ATA certification exam at the next conference.

Hopefully, AI will not take over our planet soon, because many people, and I am certainly among them, love learning languages and want to work as human interpreters and translators.

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NETWORKING AS A NEWBIE AT ATA60

Christian Miller



Christian Miller in St.Petersburg

I didn't know what to expect from the conference, but saw it as a learning opportunity, a chance to practice my networking skills and to get my name out there. I lived and worked in St. Petersburg, Russia, for nine years. There, I taught English and became immersed in Russian life. After five years of living there, I started translating and editing Russian to English translations that my Russian colleagues had done. These jobs came to me informally, through acquaintances and word of mouth.

However, in America I found it challenging to integrate myself into the industry. While the job was familiar, the job market and ways of making connections felt foreign to me. Nonetheless, I was determined to embrace the struggles I had been experiencing and looked to the ATA Annual Conference as an opportunity to build a foundation from which I could operate in the future. However, where was I to begin?

In my hotel, the evening before the conference, I reviewed the schedule and planned on attending "Buddies Welcome Newbies." My focus attuned itself to embracing my role as a newcomer to both the conference and to American business culture. I decided to eat some humble pie and to start at the very beginning. I had to relearn how to conduct business as a translator. Because I had done it informally in Russia. I realized my biggest obstacle was that I felt so awkward when it came to the business side of the industry, and this was exactly the place to meet that discomfort head-on. ATA60 catered to both the newbie to the industry and the seasoned veteran. I decided to target what I found the most challenging—networking.

Having arrived at the event, I was surprised at how many people, many in my own age-group, were in attendance. I felt a boost of confidence seeing all of us gathered together in one room. I was not an alien to

my surroundings after all. Much to the contrary, I began to feel like a part of a larger community of linguists. As it turned out, I had more in common with the people in the room than I had previously thought.

"Buddies Welcome Newbies" started promptly at 4:45. The presenter walked up to the mic, welcomed us, and then said: "It's hard for us, being introverts, to network, but here we are all together, a room full of introverts." His humor was dry and his intonation slightly sardonic. We all laughed. The anticipatory tension that had been gathering in the room a few minutes prior to the event was released and with it a little bit of my insecurity. I wasn't alone, we were all a little stilted socially and we could laugh about it.

I found it curious that the pith of our job is the precise conveyance and transference of meaning from one language to another, yet communicating face-to-face was often perplexing and full of awkward moments. "So, it is not only I who find networking bewildering, it kind of goes with the territory here!" I thought to myself. Instead of having anxiety and clenching my teeth, I found myself laughing and smiling.

Next, the host explained the directions for an activity: "I will make a statement, if it is true for you, stand up and find somebody else standing, point at them and say 'connection!'" It sounded a bit trite, some from the audience groaned, but the levity broke the ice, and everybody seemed relaxed and engaged. Unexpectedly, I was having fun. The gentleman presenting said, "Stand up if you came here from California. Find a person also standing, point at them and say 'connection!'" More than half the room stood up (after all, we were in California), and there was more laughter. As the game progressed the statements became more specific and by the end, I had learned that more than ten people had come to ATA60 from abroad and there were several other Russian speakers in the room. "Buddies Welcome Newbies" created a sense of community from scratch and indeed, I came across these faces many more times over the remainder of the conference.

For the next activity, we were broken into newbie-buddy pairs. Buddies had attended at least two ATA Conferences in the past. Groups paired two newbies for every buddy; our group was the odd group out and had three new attendees. Our buddy was named Ben. Ben was personable and well-spoken. It

was not the information itself that made this activity, but the way it was presented. Ben was excellent at sharing networking tips with us through modeling. By the end of the activity we had exchanged business cards and had all agreed to meet for coffee the next day. The information presented was concise, direct, and immediate.

One point Ben touched on was the importance of mirroring body language when socializing. On the surface this was common knowledge, but immediately all of us became mindful of how we were standing and communicating. I noticed it in myself and witnessed it in the others. We were standing at a round high-top, but the circle wasn't fully closed. We looked at each other and after a short awkward moment we made adjustments and closed the circle. The shift in dynamics was palpable. A sense of equanimity was established, our conversation flowed smoothly, and, as I straightened my shoulders, I felt comfortable networking. This was a new experience for me. I realized that previous to this I often conveyed timidity, and this insecurity overshadowed my strengths. This activity was strategically scheduled at the beginning of the evening and consequently was instantly useful. The event was immediately followed by the Welcome Celebration, and this was the perfect time to practice my new set of skills.

At the Welcome Celebration, I was able to put faces to the names of those I had worked with on-line. The crowd was large, and I decided to mingle. The reception was held at the Palm Springs Convention Center's J LH Plaza. The food was delicious and, although the portions were modest, there were multiple food stations. There was no shame in going back for seconds or a bite of something else. This was also a convenient way to both mingle and be well fed, which worked to my advantage as I had not found a chance to get dinner that evening. As dusk settled and surrounded by the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and San Bernardino mountain ranges, Palm Springs provided a stunning setting.

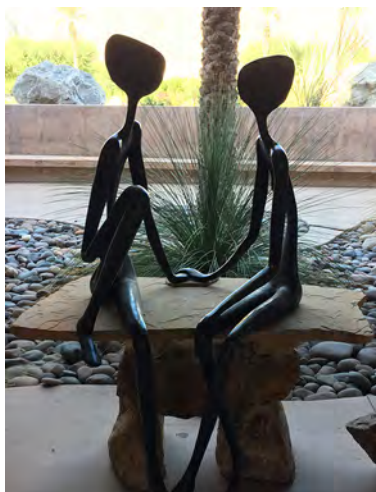
The convention center in Palm Springs was designed to incorporate the natural colors of its desert setting and to reflect this beauty in its design. As night fell and the honey lights glowed from within the center, I realized that the location of ATA60 was an extension of the conference itself. Taking advantage of the local color is a necessary counterpoint to all the professional-development activity. If you don't remember to enjoy

yourself, you are missing the point of attending the annual ATA Annual Conference and it was more than once that we were reminded to enjoy what this small and charming city had to offer.

As a bookend to the first networking event I attended "Brainstorming Networking" near the end of the conference. Going into the event an attendee asked me, "have you done this before?" I wasn't sure why she asked me that, and she added, "I heard it's like the speed dating of networking. It's fun and you meet a lot of people." I confess, I had never done speed dating and the premise both amused me and made me a little suspicious. Speed networking sounded like the last thing I wanted to do. However, it was fun and the context in which it was presented worked well. The presentation hall used for this event was replete with several high-top tables, similar to the ones we had used in the first networking event. I realized that this was quite functional for our purposes as the high tops replicated the way you would stand round the table and communicate at a networking happy hour.

For this event our instructions were to form groups of four. Envelops were placed on the tables, each with different numbers. Within each envelop was a difficult scenario or dilemma related to the industry that we had to solve as a team. One I remember was a situation in which a translation agency had started using CAT tools for translation rather than translators. Instead, this fictitious agency was using translators to edit and fix the translation. In this scenario, translators were paid for editing and therefore suffered a pay cut. This was helpful because it allowed me to look at these issues from a variety of viewpoints. This not only broadened my own perspective but informed me of common problems in the industry and how translators are dealing with them.

The groups formed and reformed several times. After introducing ourselves quickly, we exchanged business cards. Initially, many of us felt trepidation about passing out business cards before anything had been said. However, we had a limited amount of time to brainstorm together, so by the end we found a way to get this part over fast. At times the cards flew across the table like cards at a blackjack table, which again lightened the mood and made us more communicative. This was fun! My next point may seem prosaic, but what gave this exercise verve was the pacing. We only had a few minutes to



An interesting sculpture outside the Palm Springs Convention Center. PHOTO: Galina Raff

make introductions, propose a solution, listen to other perspectives and then decide on something as a group, then a bell was rung and we had to find three new partners that we had not met before and do it all over again.

The quick tempo of the activity created a kind of stress test. This networking event was in contrast to our initial one, where things were explained clearly, and the activity was carried out kinesthetically. That event created mindfulness around body language and turn-taking in conversation. This event incorporated all of those elements but forced us to apply them quickly, accurately, and under time pressure. This was more like real life. I found that this was an excellent test of the skills I had learned earlier and had been practicing throughout the event. Because of the frenetic pacing, I found that sometimes I did well and at other times I found my comments misfiring.

There was one situation where I had made a connection with another participant initially but then diminished myself in some way. Consequently, I lost their interest, but I found it instructive because of the basic skills that had been explained to us previously by Ben. In this particular instance, I realized that my posture and my turn-taking in conversation needed adjustment. Although I wished I had kept that connection, this mistake was invaluable to me. My awareness of how I communicated with my colleagues was

sharper, and it felt satisfying to be able to identify what I had done wrong and then implement a change for the next group. Also, it was here that I made an unexpected connection with another attendee with whom I share common interests and am in current correspondence to this day.

Although these networking tips could be viewed as commonplace and formulaic, they were actually liberating. They provided a reference point to return to when going to an interview, meeting a client, or having a casual conversation about linguistics with a colleague. In the real world we don't know what to expect when we go into new situations and meet people for the first time. The first three minutes of that exchange are crucial and decide where that new relationship will go. This event also came with its own reward. By the end we had exchanged business cards with every other member at the table. So, we did walk away with something tangible as well, and indeed what I brought home from ATA60 I still carry with me today. I'm moving forward in my career and I can't wait until ATA61 in Boston!

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PHOTO: Galina Raff



PHOTO: Nora Favorov

The sights of sunny Southern California.

Left, conference attendees needed only to step outside the Convention Center to see how Palm Springs got its name.

Above, SLD members Elana Pick, Nora Favorov, and David Stephenson descend Chino Canyon in the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

Exploring the English Tense System: Advanced Version

Presented by Paul Gallagher
 Reviewed by Natalie Shahova

In 2018, during ATA59 in New Orleans, Paul Gallagher participated in a panel that included five brief reports on the issues presented when translating tenses to and from different Slavic languages. (An extended summary of his presentation, “English vs. Russian Tenses,” by Paul B. Gallagher, can be found in the spring 2019 issue of *SlavFile*, p. 11.)

This year, at ATA60 in Palm Springs, Paul made a full solo presentation, delivering a more advanced analysis of the differences between the tense systems in English and Russian.

The presentation started with a concise description of the English tense system. Below is the diagram that Paul used to illustrate the English system. On the diagram, the word “Present” is in quotes to remind us, the non-natives, that what is being conveyed is that the events or situations referred to are not necessarily current, since these same tenses are also used for statements of general truth and events or situations that are not tied to any particular time (for example: “This review is written by a non-native,” or “Non-natives often make mistakes in English tenses”).



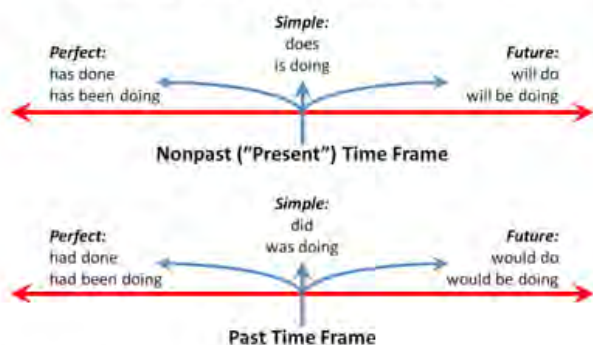
speakers may say incorrectly, for example, “I think someone is at the door, I am hearing [instead of “I hear”] the bell.”

Modal verbs present a major problem for Russians who write and speak English: we often don’t appreciate the subtleties of usage and confuse when to use “can,” “may” and other modals. Paul commented that the meanings attached to particular modals are often expressed in Russian by adverbials. For example, where in English we would say, “He might (or may) come tomorrow,” a native Russian writing in English would be likely to say “Possibly, he will come.” Another very common mistake made by Russian native speakers in English is using the future in both clauses of if/when sentences, where it is correct to use the present tense following *if* or *when*. For example, “When you arrive [not “will arrive”], we will have dinner ready.”

This theoretical part of Paul’s talk was followed by some detailed examples that would have surely caused problems to me as a non-native English speaker if I were to translate analogous wordings from Russian into English.

The presentation also included some samples in which formal grammatical rules were broken in order to be concise and/or pithy, for example in newspaper headlines or in deprecated but common usage by contemporary speakers of English.

Past vs. Nonpast Time Frame



Paul also described the conditions that require use of the simple, perfect, or future tenses, and noted that the most common phrasing of perfect tenses differs in American English and British English. The former often favors simple tense + participle (is/was gone), whereas the latter favors perfect tense + participle (has/had gone).

The next topic to be discussed was the use of English progressive forms. Here, the audience was reminded that some verbs, for example verbs of sensation and feeling, are not used in these forms, or are used only in very specific contexts. Non-native



Audience members approach Paul Gallagher after his presentation. Photo published with presenter’s permission.

PHOTO: Galina Raff

Paul correctly attributed the principal mistakes Russian native speakers make using English tenses to the differences between our two tense frameworks.

I will conclude my review with a list of examples that Paul provided illustrating differences in how native and non-native English speakers tend to combine tenses with adverbials (which we non-natives apparently prefer) versus modals when using various tenses. The question marks before the first wording in each pair express Paul's opinion that they are not natural English. Of using the adverbials "probably," "surely," and "possibly," rather than a modal, Paul commented: "To put in that adverbial—it's grammatically correct, it's legal, you won't get arrested, but it's not typically the way English speakers speak."

1. (?) Probably, he will come tomorrow.
 (✓) He will probably come tomorrow.
2. (?) Surely, he will come tomorrow.
 (✓) He will (surely) come tomorrow.
3. (?) It's possible that he will/may/might/could come tomorrow.
 (✓) He may/might/could come tomorrow.
4. (?) It is alleged that he likes young girls.
 (✓) He is alleged to like young girls.
5. (?) It is alleged that he murdered his father.
 (✓) He is alleged to have murdered his father.
6. (??) It is supposed that he will come tomorrow.
 (✓) He is supposed to come tomorrow.
7. (?) It seems/appears that he wants to make a deal.
 (✓) He seems/appears to want to make a deal.
8. (?) It is expected that he will come tomorrow.
 (✓) He is expected to come tomorrow.

The author wishes to thank *SlavFile* editor Liv Bliss, who also attended this talk, for some valuable editorial contributions to this article.

To learn more about the Natalie Shahova, please see her article on p. 11.



The Exhibit Hall was packed with attendees checking out products, programs, employers, and services. PHOTO: Galina Raff

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Note: This is the third of four columns dealing with the translation and analysis of Krylov and his work that I have done.

Krylov PART III: Was Krylov a Social Liberal? PRO

Decades ago, when I first started translating Ivan Krylov for a local children's theater run by Russian emigres, I assumed that he was the kind of conventional moralist for children that I had encountered in many Aesop's fables I was exposed to as a child and the few by La Fontaine we memorized in French class, which pontificated against flattery and greed and propounded the principle that one reaps what one sows in the way of good behavior.

When I delved more deeply into Krylov's works for the book I published in 2010 (*The Frogs Who Begged for a Tsar* [Russian Life, 2010]), I saw that he was more complicated than this. In some ways, he seemed to be quite progressive, honoring the work of the lowly bees, ants, and moles, satirizing those who do not understand the good coming from newfangled inventions, deploring misuse of power, and, in one of my favorite fables, "The Kite," extolling freedom. However, I also saw some rather conservative (one might even be justified saying reactionary) morals. I am using the word "moral" here to refer to the idea expressed in a particular fable, either explicitly or through implication. To me, at least some of this conservative slant appeared to result from the use of animals to portray human types and relations. After all, wolves cannot alter their taste for meat, nor scorpions their propensity to sting if they feel threatened. I was particularly disturbed by the crow who dressed in peacock feathers and was shunned and ridiculed by both peacocks and crows, especially when the rejected corvid was compared to the daughter of a merchant marrying into the noble class. Another example of this, which I encountered when working on my first book, was the fable about a snake applying to be a nursemaid. As I got more involved with the particular historic background of each fable, I found out that Krylov, who was more or less an adult during Napoleon's invasion, disliked and distrusted the French, as well as many of their Enlightenment ideas, and that in the poem about the snake nursemaid he was considered to be arguing against all the French governesses and tutors being hired by the Russian upper classes.

I discovered that those of my Russian friends (translators and others) who went through the Soviet educational system (possibly excluding those who majored in literature) were only assigned the more socially liberal fables. Recently, I have read or, at least, skimmed the rest of Krylov's fables and translated 40 more of them, bringing my total to over 100. I became convinced that in some ways Krylov may well have been a social liberal, however some of his writings were quite, or even extremely, conservative. In this and the following column I will cite fable and verse.

On the liberal side, many of the fables are concerned with the oppression of the weak by the more powerful and the abuse of authority. However, the oppressors are without exception never the highest authorities (usually King Lion or Eagle) but those in the middle. The highest authorities in the fables, if mentioned at all, are simply deluded or ill-informed.



ВОЛК И ЯГНЕНОК	THE WOLF AND THE LAMB
У сильного всегда бессильный виноват: Тому в истории мы тьму примеров слышим, Но мы истории не пишем; А вот о том как в Баснях говорят.	That those with power shift the blame to those without, So creatures weak but blameless never can prevail. World history confirms without a doubt; As does this sad instructive tale.

In the following, a peasant brings a ewe to court for supposedly eating chickens; the judge is a fox.

КРЕСТЬЯНИН И ОВЦА	THE PEASANT AND THE EWE
И приговор Лисы вот, от слова до слова: «Не принимать никак резонов от Овцы, Понеже хоронить концы Все плуты, ведомо, искусны; По справке ж явствует, что в сказанную ночь Овца от кур не отлучалась прочь, А куры очень вкусны, И случай был удобен ей; То я сужу, по совести моей: Нельзя, чтоб утерпела И кур она не съела; И вследствие того казнить Овцу. И мясо в суд отдать, а шкуру взять истцу».	Here's Judge Fox's ruling or at least the gist: "I won't accept this ewe's glib testimony. All sheep tell lies; her story's surely phony. For how could she resist When hens are so delicious... Alone with them the whole night through: Conditions were propitious! The court decrees: death to the ewe! The plaintiff gets the pelt as recompense; The court retains the meat to cover our expense."

Next, a Vixen complains to her friend that she has been fired from her job as head of the henhouse.

ЛИСИЦА И СУРОК	THE WOODCHUCK AND THE VIXEN
«Мне взятки брать? да разве я взбешуся! Ну, видывал ли ты, я на тебя пошлюся, Чтоб этому была причастна я греху? Подумай, вспомни хорошенько». — «Нет, кумушка; а видывал частенько, Что рыльце у тебя в пуху».	"Dear Woodchuck, we've been friends so long. When have you known me to do wrong? Accepting bribes, engaged in graft?" The Woodchuck looked at her and laughed. "Oh, no, I've never seen you sin But I've seen feathers on your chin."

Other fables with this theme include, "The Popular Assembly" («Мирская сходка»), "The Elephant Appointed Province Governor" («Слон на воеводство»), "The Dance of the Fish" («Рыбья пляска»), and "The Lion" («Лев»).

In a few poems, it turns out that the praiseworthy work of some higher official has actually been done by a talented underling.

In "The VIP," an Oriental official is sent to paradise because he left all decisions to his much more competent secretary.

ВЕЛЬМОЖА	THE VIP
«Родился в Персии, а чином был сатрап; Но так как, живучи, я был здоровьем слаб, То сам я областью не правил, А все дела секретарю оставил».	"I ruled a Persian province for the king But I felt ill and hardly did a thing. I left the real work to my aide And he's the one who all my rulings made."

After the testimony, the judge sends the man to paradise and answers the objections of a new member of the court as follows.

«Не видишь разве ты? Покойник — был дурак!
 Что, если бы с такою властью
 Взялся он за дела, к несчастью, —
 Ведь погубил бы целый край!..
 И ты б там слез не обобрался!
 Затем-то и попал он в рай,
 Что за дела не принимался».

The judge replied, "It's very plain
 That you're new here, so I'll explain
 Just why this verdict was accorded.
 You surely see this man's a fool
 And quite incapable of rule.
 So if to rule his province he'd endeavored
 It might have been destroyed forever.
 To paradise we send a few
 As a reward for what they failed to do."

A wooden idol delivers wonderful prophecies and advice and then descends to idiocy; it turns out a priest inside the hollow figure is prophesying and the wisdom depends on which priest has the assignment.

ОРАКУЛ

Я слышал – правда ль? – будто встарь
 Судей таких видали,
 Которые весьма умны бывали,
 Пока у них был умный секретарь.

THE ORACLE

I've heard that in a long past age,
 A judge who wanted to seem sage
 A name for wisdom could maintain
 When he'd an aide with first-rate brain.

An impressive number of Krylov's poems praise members of lower classes (species) for working hard and taking pleasure in their support of the whole. As the wolf and fox are the most common embodiments of abusers in his verse, bees particularly stand out for praise as diligent, uncomplaining, and humbly satisfied workers.

ОРЕЛ И ПЧЕЛА

Но сколь и тот почтен, кто, в низости сокрытый,
 За все труды, за весь потерянный покой
 Ни славою, ни почестями не льстится,
 И мыслью оживлен одной:
 Что к пользе общей он трудится.

Пчела отвечает: «Тебе хвала и честь!
 Да продлит над тобой Зевес свои щедроты!
 А я, родясь труды для общей пользы несть,
 Не отличать ищущи свои работы,
 Но утешаюсь тем, на наши смотря соты,
 Что в них и моего хоть капля меду есть».

THE EAGLE AND THE BEE

But just as worthy of respect are those, unknown,
 Who toil to serve the common good and not their own.
 They fame and riches neither seek nor find.
 Their sole reward's the thought they've helped their kind.

The Bee said, "Your fame you well deserve.
 May Zeus prolong your days of glory.
 The life I lead's a different story,
 For bees like me are born to serve.
 Our honey goes into a common store.
 Which drops are mine I cannot tell;
 But when I see our comb with honey in each cell
 I know that mine are there, and do not wish for more."

Readers will notice that the bees do not ask for anything more than they have—the satisfaction of supporting the hive. Krylov is more than willing to acknowledge the worth of the bottom tier in supporting the whole, as long as they know their place and do not seek higher positions or more remuneration. This is certainly more positive than not acknowledging them, but it is not liberalism, and certainly not socialism. A very good example of this is "The Dog and the Horse." It is short so I will cite it in its entirety.

СОБАКА И ЛОШАДЬ

У одного крестьянина служа,
 Собака с Лошадью считаются как-то стали.
 «Вот, — говорит Барбос, — большая госпожа!
 По мне хоть бы тебя совсем с двора согнали,
 Велика вещь возить или пахать!
 Об удалстве твоём другого не слышать:
 И можно ли тебе равняться в чём со мною?
 Ни днём, ни ночью я не ведаю покою:
 Днём стадо под моим надзором на лугу,
 А ночью дом я стерегу!»
 «Конечно, — Лошадь отвечала,
 Твоя правдива речь;
 Однако же, когда б я не пахала,
 То нечего б тебе здесь было и стеречь».

THE DOG AND THE HORSE

A peasant had two servants—Dog and Horse.
 Dog felt himself superior, of course,
 And told the Horse she was of little worth.
 “You’re no big deal, with me you can’t compete;
 Your labor isn’t worth the hay you eat.

 “Why, any fool could pull a cart and plow the earth.
 It takes no courage; you’re not stressed.
 But me, why, night and day I never rest.
 I guard the flock all day; at night the house and yard!”
 “There’s truth in what you say, I must allow;”
 Said Horse, “Your work is dangerous and hard.
 Yet, if I didn’t plow,
 What would there be to guard?”

In other fables with this moral, those higher up suffer for not having listened to or accepted the advice of the lowly—these morals are always, however, argued on the basis that, of course, those below (both literally and figuratively) have gained certain skills and knowledge that those above are not privy to. Another fable with more or less the same moral is “The Leaves and the Roots.” The more common Aesopian theme, represented in “The Lion and the Mouse,” shows that if one in a lofty position does a favor for one below, the lowly one may later return a life-saving favor, but this does not appear in any fables original to Krylov. (Even in this one, instead of the lion being rescued by the mouse, the King of Beasts lives to regret laughing off the rodent’s offer of a potential exchange of favors.)

In the following fable, the eagle disregards a mole’s advice that he should not make his family a home on the top of a tree because its roots are rotten. The eagle ignores him, and the tree topples, killing his family. A very similar moral occurs in the fable of “The Leaves and The Roots.”

ОРЕЛ И КРОТ

От горести не взвидя свету:
 «Несчастный! — он сказал, —
 За гордость рок меня так люто наказал,
 Что не послушался я умного совету.
 Но можно ль было ожидать,
 Чтобы ничтожный Крот совет мог добрый дать?»
 «Когда бы ты не презрел мною, —
 Из норки Крот сказал, — то вспомнил бы, что рою
 Свои я норы под землей,
 И что, случаясь близ корней,
 Здорово ль дерево, я знать могу верней».

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

In bitter grief, King Eagle cried
 “I’m being punished for my pride
 And for my snobbery.
 But how could I have ever guessed
 A lowly mole would know what’s best?”
 Mole said, “Disdain had made you blind.
 If not, you would have borne in mind
 One simple thing.
 That underground is where I dwell;
 And so I know tree roots quite well,
 And if they’re rotten I can tell.
 Much better than a king.”

The only other fables I have identified that show Krylov to be a man of the Enlightenment (as opposed to simply espousing traditional virtues and castigating traditional sins) are those criticizing creatures who are too ignorant to appreciate intelligence and/or science. There are several of these, all original as far as I know. Here are the morals of some of them.

СВИНЬЯ ПОД ДУБОМ

Невежда так же в ослепленье
 Бранит науку и ученье,
 И все ученые труды,
 Не чувствуя, что он вкушает их плоды.

THE SOW BENEATH THE OAK

Those fools who curse all science and its fruits
 Are like that Sow who dug up Oak tree’s roots—
 Too blind to see the science they abuse
 Gives rise to many things that they delight to use.

МАРТЫШКА И ОЧКИ

Как ни полезна вещь, цены не зная ей,
Невежда про нее свой толк все к худу клонит;
А ежели невежда познатней,
Так он ее еще и гонит.

THE MONKEY AND THE SPECTACLES

The world of men knows such cases too,
When fools ignore the worth of something new.
And, since they cannot understand it,
They call it names and say it will not do
While those who have the power try to ban it.

Finally, I have found one fable whose ending sounds like a call for personal freedom, though Krylov makes no mention of other progressive virtues. The fable begins with a kite mocking a moth for the fact that it cannot fly as high as he does. The moth replies:

БУМАЖНЫЙ ЗМЕЙ

«Хоть высоко, но ты на привязи летаешь.
Такая жизнь, мой свет,
От счастья весьма далеко;
А я, хоть, правда, невысоко,
Зато лечу
Куда хочу;
Да я же так, как ты, в забаву для другого,
Пустого
Век целый не трещу».

THE KITE

“You soar, it’s true, but always on a lead.
Life on a leash, my friend,
Though high it may ascend,
Is an unhappy one, indeed.
But as for me,
I am free.
Though I fly low,
I choose where I will go.
And do not rise and fall
At someone else’s beck and call.”

One other fable, “The Cat and the Nightingale” (Krylov’s embodiment of True Art), focuses on freedom, but is considered to be a response to a recent tightening of literary and artistic censorship that Krylov rightfully felt personally. In this fable, a music-loving cat captures a nightingale to hear it sing, but the bird is so terrified it can only croak, so the cat destroys it.

КОШКА И СОЛОВЕЙ

Сказать ли на ушко, яснее, мысль мою?
Худые песни Соловью
В когтях у Кошки.

THE CAT AND THE NIGHTINGALE

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.

The next and last installment in this series will provide examples of how Krylov, or at least his fables, opposed some of the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment.

As always, comments are invited. Send to lydiastone@verizon.net.

ATTENTION READERS WHO WORK WITH SLAVIC LANGUAGES OTHER THAN RUSSIAN!

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