Artificial Intelligence and Translation:
The ATA Conference Notes of a Relapsing Computer Engineer

John Riedl

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At least for me, if the ATA 64th Annual Conference had had a theme, it would have been artificial intelligence. Seemingly every conversation touched upon generative AI and the disruption it has caused or will cause our industry. Although my conference goal was to learn about machine translation, I attended as many AI sessions as possible. Some were good, some were awful, but all of them lacked an essential element: a framework to understand and react to the changes taking place in our industry. This article proposes one such framework. Using two classic business theories (disruptive innovation and the dynamics of innovation), it suggests how we got here and where we might be heading. It goes on to discuss some factors that may slow the development of this technology and closes by discussing three considerations that may be obvious to the linguist but seem to have been missed by the engineers.

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In this issue:

The past few years have seen the translation industry hit by not one but two disruptive technologies. No sooner had we begun to adjust to a world where NMT (neural machine translation, such as DeepL) was forcing us to become post-editors, when generative AI (ChatGPT) came along to shake our industry, including NMT providers and developers, to its core. Some of us continue to translate more or less as before, while others are scrambling to find a place in a rapidly changing market. This should not come as a surprise. In his classic 1997 book *The Innovator's Dilemma* (Christensen, 1997), Harvard professor Clayton M. Christensen describes the process by which disruptive technologies take over a market. First, established companies (in our world, freelance translators and language service providers) focus on the higher, more lucrative end of the market, thus giving technical innovators the opportunity to establish a foothold in the market's lower end. With experience, these innovators improve their quality and become increasingly competitive at all levels of the market. In our case, we have known for some time that in exchange for lower cost or a faster turnaround time, some customers have been willing to tolerate grammatical mistakes, non-native English, etc. It is little wonder that this is where computer translation took hold. We should not, however, pin our hopes on the current limitations of computer translation. On the contrary, we can expect both NMT and generative AI to improve with time.

Translation is by no means the first industry to experience technological disruption. To understand where we are headed, it is useful to look at the phases of innovation outlined in the work of Abernathy and Utterback. According to their model, artificial intelligence is currently in a transitional phase during which innovative companies are competing for market dominance. Just as in the early '80s, when Microsoft, Apple, Commodore, Coleco, and many others competed to become the standard for personal computers, OpenAI (ChatGPT and Bing), Meta (Llama), and other less-well-known AI companies are now competing to become the standard in AI. The transitional phase also includes process innovations, for example, prompt writing will almost certainly become much easier over time. Others have suggested that generative AI will be used as an aid or "copilot" for cheaper NMT programs (Federmann, 2023)—in other words, that we will be using AI-enhanced NMT in the not-too-distant future.

Of course, there are some things business theory can't predict. Although AI has seemingly come out of nowhere to take our industry by storm, there are some indications that its rate of development may be slowing. As it turns out, progress in AI depends on large amounts of training data (Brown and others, 2020) and processing power (Vashi, 2023). In both cases, these resources are becoming more expensive. As I write this, I am thinking about Bitcoin "mines," which use enormous amounts of energy and computer resources.

Like all specialists, engineers working on new technology can remain oblivious to some long-term consequences of their own innovations. While attending the ATA and American Machine Translation Association conferences, I thought of at least three

long-lasting and perhaps unanticipated effects for translators of the emergence of AI.

First, although translation quality has been seemingly discussed to death, we are missing an important consequence of AI hallucinations. ("Hallucination" is the term used when AI makes something up.) Perhaps counterintuitively, subject matter knowledge will become more and not less important as AI enters our industry. The translator will be the first line of defense against false information and should be compensated for this added value. As a corollary, the industry will have to decide who is liable if such hallucinations make it into finished translations.

Second, as a profession, we may not be thinking about AI's effect on language itself. It is easy to see how AI might increase the influence of English on other world languages. Because AI was initially trained using mostly English-language documents (in ChatGPT-3, 93.7% of documents were in English [Brown and others, 2020]), it seems reasonable to expect, and personal experience seems to confirm, that even though AI may output something in Russian, for now, it thinks with an American accent. As follows, AI's translation quality is correlated to the number of source and target-language documents used to train the model: the fewer the documents, the worse the translation.

Finally, the computerization of translation and research will standardize language. Computers like simple language and do not like ambiguity. I worry that the quality of writing in all fields will suffer as the result of this standardization.

It would be hard to conclude an article such as this without touching upon the most important point. Our profession has changed forever. For now, some areas of the market seem relatively unscathed, but business theory says it is just a matter of time until we are all affected. As much as we would like to think we can adjust without a hitch, the fact is that we are human and should take some time to reflect on what we have lost and what we may be losing in the future.

John Riedl is a freelance Russian>English translator and member of ATA's Certification Committee. After receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees in engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he worked as an electrical engineer for several companies, including GE Medical Systems. He left the corporate world in 2002 and taught seventh grade math for two years as part of the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. He has been translating ever since he completed the University of Chicago Graham School's Translation Studies Certificate Program in 2006.

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Notes from the Administrative Underground

Steven McGrath, SLD Administrator

Hello, I'm your new division administrator! You might recognize me from the annual meeting, the quarterly Zoom meetups or recent conferences. The previous issue of *SlavFile* contained my candidate statement, as well as that of our new assistant administrator, Natalia Postrigan. If I haven't been in contact with you before, I look forward to making your acquaintance. And please don't hesitate to drop me a line.

I am grateful to previous administrator Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya for managing everything so well and for looping me into the ongoing business of the division over the past four years. As a result, we have an excellent and growing pool of volunteers who have agreed to continue helping the SLD serve its members (and there is always room for more volunteers!). Eugenia has led by example, serving as webmaster through the recent challenges and taking over responsibility for, among other things, the SLD blog.

We also owe special thanks to Nora Favorov in this, her final issue of *SlavFile* as managing editor. She has shown incredible energy during her tenure and brought ambitious plans to fruition, in particular by broadening the newsletter's coverage to the benefit of all language pairs and specializations. It's important work, and we hope that a volunteer will come forward to continue it. We have an excellent team of editors to help this volunteer get started, including Galina Raff, who has provided our beautiful layouts for many years. In the meantime, future articles from SLD members (including this column) will be posted to the blog, while you can also find back issues of *SlavFile* on the website (https://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile/).

Speaking of *SlavFile*'s editorial team, Halla Bearden interviewed poetry editor Martha Kosir for her most recent episode of the *Slovo* podcast (https://soundcloud.com/atasld/episode-32-martha-kosir), so you can check that out.

Martha was one of the SLD's presenters at ATA64 in Miami, along with me, Natalia, Vladimir Reznikov and Katarzyna Diehl. You can read reviews of these sessions in this issue. I'm already excited for Portland in 2024! At the SLD's annual meeting, Nora brought up the idea of a panel on country-specific news terminology, and I think something like that would be an excellent opportunity for members to work together on a session proposal. Let's get the ball rolling!

The 2023 SLD Dinner was a tasty Brazilian buffet at Camila's Restaurant, a short walk from the conference hotel.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Slavic Languages Division of the American Translators Association

September 22, 2023
Held online via Zoom

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya, Outgoing Administrator
Steven McGrath, Assistant Administrator and Incoming Administrator
Natalia Postrigan, Incoming Assistant Administrator

1. The meeting was called to order shortly after 3:00 PM ET.

2. The agenda was accepted with no changes.

3. The 2022 Annual Meeting minutes were accepted with no changes.

4. Guest Analia Bogdan shared information about the new ATA Special Interest Groups (Financial Translators, Interpreters and Translators in Education, and Southeast Asian Languages).

5. The election results were announced and Steven McGrath and Natalia Postrigan took office as administrator and assistant administrator, respectively. Steve then took over leading the meeting.

6. Division members presented an overview of Division events in the past year.

   a. Report on *SlavFile* and blog

      i. Editor Nora Favorov reported that she would retire from editing *SlavFile* after the post-conference winter issue.

      ii. Angelina Kovaleva asked if Substack is an option for hosting the newsletter. Eugenia proposed moving all the articles to the blog, inasmuch as individual articles had been reprinted there before the website outage. ATA Division bylaws allow for a blog to function as the newsletter for a division. Eugenia volunteered to edit or co-edit the blog.

   b. Report on the SLD Podcast (*Slovo*)

      i. Halla Bearden reported that several episodes had been published this year, but fewer than before, not least because several guests had run into health issues. She asked for ideas for potential guests and feedback on the length and format.

   c. Report on website

      i. Eugenia reported on the website outage earlier in the year (a full writeup can be found in the summer-fall 2023 issue of *SlavFile*, p. 5). Technical issues in spring 2023 took down many ATA-hosted division websites, including SLD's, and the migration and updates required to fix the problems caused an outage for several months. The issues have now been resolved, and the website is back up with full functionality. Eugenia confirmed that she would continue to manage the website.

      ii. Eugenia and Nora highlighted several features of the website, including the *SlavFile* archive going back to 1999, a resources page, and the blog with a subscription option.

   d. Report on online forum, social media, and Zoom networking sessions

      i. Steve McGrath thanked the members managing each of the division's social media accounts, including Anna Livermore for Facebook, Julia Thornton for the Google forum, Elizabeth Adams for Twitter/X, and Mikhail Yashchuk for LinkedIn (none of these members were present).

  ii. Attendees were asked to provide input on the Twitter/X account. Elizabeth Adams was no longer posting to the account, leaving the option of finding a new curator or shutting down the account. Steve asked for a show of hands on whether the account should continue. The majority answer was "no." Angelina Kovaleva spoke in support of continuing the account and expressed interest in taking it over. Nora also commented that it may be beneficial to keep the account open.

  iii. Steve reported that Zoom networking sessions were held in January, April, and July.

 e. Report on SLD ATA Certification Exam Prep Group

  i. Eugenia reported that the group was shut down in late 2022. Steve added that if there is any interest in restarting a practice group, it would be welcome. Dmitry Beschetny asked if the existing group was dormant until it could be relaunched, and Eugenia explained that the Slack workspace and content have been deleted.

7. New Business for 2023

 a. ATA's 65th Annual Conference (Portland, OR, October 30 – November 2, 2024)

  i. The division will not be nominating a Distinguished Speaker for ATA65, but suggestions were welcomed for the following conference, in Boston.

  ii. Suggestions for session proposals were solicited. These included MT specific to Slavic languages, and a panel on country-specific news terminology with presenters covering several languages. Members were encouraged to consider presenting as a team (as Steve and Natalia did at ATA64) or as a panel to lower the barrier to proposing a session.

 b. Call for volunteers

  i. Nora Favorov mentioned that help is needed to find a restaurant for the annual dinner, particularly from members local to the area. Shelley Fairweather-Vega posted a suggestion for Kachka, and Angelina Kovaleva offered to email Steve some suggestions for non-Slavic restaurants.

8. Call for feedback and suggestions from the members

 a. Paul Gallagher asked about a longer duration for annual division meetings, as the half-hour scheduled for this meeting proved too short. Eugenia said that this one had been scheduled for half an hour based on the previous few years not taking long, and noted that in the future the division would request a full hour based on this feedback.

 b. Nora asked if everyone present had joined the Google forum. Some people indicated they had not, and Eugenia explained how to request to join the group (by emailing the group at ata-sld-forum+owners@googlegroups.com or moderator Julia Thornton at julia.thornton@alterustranslations.com).

9. Call for newcomers to introduce themselves

 a. Two new members were present and introduced themselves: Ganna Gudkova, an interpreter working with Russian and Ukrainian, and Angelina Kovaleva, Russian>English translator with about 10 years' experience, who also teaches English to Russian speakers.

10. Steve and Eugenia encouraged attendees to attend the SLD Dinner at Camila's Restaurant in Miami during ATA64.

11. The meeting was adjourned.

"They Have No Idea: Translation Insiders and Outsiders, Part I"

Presented by SLD Distinguished Speaker Carol Apollonio
Reviewed by Chris Pawlowski

If you were in the audience for Distinguished Speaker Carol Apollonio's "leap into the void" at this year's ATA Annual Conference, this review may serve to: a) rekindle your delight in this wild, yet pithy ride into the inner world of translation and the translator, b) refresh your memory of the references to which she alluded, and c) allow you to bask in the unique nature of your profession as a translator/interpreter. If you did not attend ATA64, there is, unfortunately, no "re-viewing" the 63 slides Dr. Apollonio showed to reinforce, challenge and entertain (although you can flip through them here to at least get a delicious taste of her talk).

In this first part of her two-lecture presentation entitled "They Have No Idea: Translation Insiders and Outsiders," Dr. Apollonio posed the question we all ask ourselves as we end a day of wordsmithing: What did I do today? Her answer in a nutshell: translation is a transfer of metaphors. Her caveat: the end result of this process may bring to mind Dr. Apollonio's experience at an international conference of Russian literary translators. She had translated German Sadulaev's novel *Tabletka*. Sadulaev, who was present at the conference, made this comment about her translation: "It was a good translation, but a completely different book."

What are Dr. Apollonio's thoughts on the study of translation theory? She would have the working translator skip over Douglas Robinson's work *The Translator's Turn*, a 'terrifying though fascinating book of translation theory," in favor of Robinson's book *Becoming a Translator*, a "sensible" though dated guide for translators, from which she borrowed the concept of outsiders and insiders for this talk. The outsiders order and pay for the product, but have no real interest in what it

takes for the translator to generate it. She offered several stories from her experience that underscored the critical importance of the human factor in language experiences, even if a machine (a phone, for example) can "pick these up like packages, move them over into the other language, plop them down there."

Dr. Apollonio offered yet other insider insights.

- **On the translator as performer**: She had picked a work to translate and teach written by a "misogynist, politically incorrect male writer" (Sadulaev) that she found interesting. She says she "thought I'd see if I could act the role." Her woman's role was to listen to the author, but her voice was that of the author. She performed for her students, who rebelled against Sadulaev's negative view of women. Further on the subject of translation as a performing art she paid tribute to Robert Wechsler's *Performing Without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation*. According to Apollonio, "Translation is a performing art, with the original as the play's text, and our translation as the performance."

- **On simultaneous vs. consecutive interpreting**: "Simultaneous happens automatically—you open your ears and make sure the Russian flows through the right part of your brain, and as it

Carol Apollonio delivers Part I of her talk
Photo: Nora Favorov
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does it triggers the appropriate mechanisms for speech and the English just flows out, unhindered by thought. Consecutive, though, involves cognitive processing, memory, and the terrifying problem of deciphering your own handwriting."

- **On stenography and shorthand**: They are both helps to note-taking. Shorthand, being rooted in the sounds of the language from which one is interpreting, poses the problem that one needs to get out of the source language and into the target language ASAP.

- **On acronyms:** Our distinguished speaker extended her strong opinion that acronyms "shorten our lifetime."

- **On AI**: "I think that AI has the deluded sense that it is offering anything of importance to humanity."

This first session concluded with a participation exercise critiquing 9 different translations of a passage from *War and Peace*, which engendered a raucous, if convivial, discussion.

Christine Pawlowski is a freelance Polish and Russian translator with an M.A. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Indiana University, Bloomington. She is retired from teaching elementary-school music and delights in being Busia to her 17 grandchildren and in directing and accompanying her church choir. She is ATA-certified for Polish-into-English and an ATA Certification grader for that language pair. She may be contacted at pawlow@ verizon.net

"They Have No Idea: Translation Insiders and Outsiders, Part II"

Presented by SLD Distinguished Speaker Carol Apollonio
Reviewed by Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya

The second part of Distinguished Speaker Carol Apollonio's two-part session "They Have No Idea," which followed immediately after the first, was more focused on literature, literary analysis, and the actual process of translation, rather than on the translation industry as a whole, and interesting anecdotes from the speaker's life as a State Department translator and interpreter. This was not as radically different a topic as it might seem at first. By way of introduction, Carol noted that her knowledge of Russian literature proved surprisingly useful even in apparently dry diplomatic meetings. Not only does literature generally provide windows into how Russians view the world, but it is also full of descriptions of nature. In Carol's experience, even the most practical of meetings would inevitably end up in a conversation about fishing, hunting, or nature more broadly, and the participants were often impressed by her ability to interpret even obscure terms like "platypus."

Then again, Carol pointed out, outsiders are often impressed by something that takes little effort, like remembering that a platypus has a duck-like nose (утконос, literally "duck-nose") or transliterating Arabic and Turkish words in a Russian novel (no translation required!). What they don't notice is the real challenge of translation, especially in literature:

recognizing the artistic manipulations of grammar, syntax, and other aspects of language and creatively transposing them into another language with its own requirements.

This colossal challenge can trigger the feeling—common, Carol claimed, to all translators—that one's translation will never be as good as the original. On the other hand, she said that by reading several good translations, you get even more out of the work than if you'd just read the original. This brought us to the meat of the session: comparing numerous translations of Russian classics to discover and evaluate several approaches to handling what makes each author unique. Originally, we were promised a deep dive into the Tolstoy quote that had made an appearance in Part I, but instead we took a detour into Chekhov that proved to make up the rest of the talk. We never did get the Tolstoy that was promised, or a snippet of Dostoyevsky that was also planned, but the Chekhov passages were so interesting and engaging that no one appears to have been disappointed!

A key feature of Chekhov that creates particular challenges for translators is his repeated, intentional, and masterful use of various impersonal constructions. These let Chekhov blur the lines between his characters and their surroundings: if the text just says

хотелось пить или дышалось глубоко, is the feeling of thirst or deep breaths something a specific person is experiencing, or is a general, pervasive state being described? This focus on the influence of the environment constitutes a cultural difference in viewpoint between Russian and English cultures, with English literature favoring active subjects and individual free will. Such expressions force the translator to make a choice, since English grammar requires subjects, but placing too much emphasis on an active agent risks erasing Chekhov from the story entirely.

This is where comparing translations proves useful. For each example offered, Carol provided the relevant sentences from an astounding 12 different translations, spanning almost a century, from the 1910s to the early 2000s. In each case, there were a few renditions that missed the boat entirely, but numerous creative solutions remained, and audience members suggested a few alternatives as well. As Carol repeatedly reminded us, each of these solutions was valid in its own way, depending on what the translation was trying to achieve.

The first example was the opening line of "Дама с собачкой" ("The Lady with the Dog"), which starts with the word "говорили." Grammatically, that translates as "they were saying." Who are "they"? Who were "they" talking to? Why is the verb in its imperfective form? How does this one little word immediately plunge the reader into a claustrophobic environment of rampant gossip and a constant sense of being watched? That is, of course, by design, and sets up a theme for the entire story. The 12 translators handled these nuances in a variety of ways, from the somewhat questionable "became the topic of general conversation" to the literal "they were saying" to the creative "the talk was that" and "people said." This sparked a lively debate about the merits and shortcomings of each option, and naturally no consensus was reached.

The next example, from the same story, was another 3rd-person plural verb with no subject: "Его женили рано." Our favorite and simplest rendition was "He was married off early." The male character ("he") is passive in this marriage business, and some unspecified group of people must have arranged it all for him. To my surprise, no fewer than three of the 12 translations missed this detail entirely and translated this sentence as "He had married young," and another went with "He had been married young," which seems like an attempt to highlight the passivity, but doesn't quite make it.

In a third example from "The Lady with the Dog," two impersonal constructions follow back-to-back:

"хотелось пить" and "некуда было деваться." These have no subject at all, not even implied, highlighting the sense that these feelings (thirst and the inescapability of the heat—or was it a sense that everyone else was staring at them?) are something that happens to the characters rather than originating within them, and may also be happening to everyone around them. (The discussion about this example got quickly sidetracked into the meaning of праздничный день and never quite recovered.)

In the same vein, one last example from "The Bride" was full of these constructions: "дышалось глубоко," "хотелось думать," "хотелось почему-то плакать." The viewpoint is obviously that of the titular bride, but these feelings are presented in a universal and involuntary way. Thoughts and feelings arise on their own; there is no active agent. Instead of presenting the 12 translations, Carol took the opportunity to highlight the Norton Critical Edition *Anton Chekhov's Selected Stories*, edited by Cathy Popkin, the first such edition to feature translation as a focus. In it, this particular passage has its own spread comparing four different translations, including one of Carol's own.

We wrapped up the session talking briefly about gender in a passage from "Попрыгунья" ("The Grasshopper"), sound in "Спать хочется" (translated variously as "I Want to Sleep," "Sleepy," "Let Me Sleep," and others—a whole debate in itself!), and tense in "The Lady with the Dog." Chekhov layered on the use of these aspects of language to raise recurring themes in each story or highlight connections between characters or concepts. Comparing the translations where we could (unfortunately, the conference app did not make all the handouts available and the longer passages did not fit on PowerPoint slides), we were able to see where and whether translators had noticed, and how they tried to recreate the effect in English.

Just as we were about to head off into Dostoyevsky, time ran out. All the same, we were left with plenty of food for thought and a greater appreciation of the multilayered challenges our fellow translators face.

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya is an ATA-certified Russian-to-English legal translator and ATA grader. She is a former SLD Administrator and now serves as SLD blog editor and webmaster.

HANDOUT #1: *War and Peace*, excerpt #1

Пьер был неуклюж. Толстый, выше обыкновенного роста, широкий, с огромными красными руками, он, как говорится, не умел войти в салон и еще менее умел из него выйти, то есть перед выходом сказать что-нибудь особенно приятное. Кроме того, он был рассеян. Вставая, он вместо своей шляпы захватил треугольную шляпу с генеральским плюмажем и держал ее, дергая султан, до тех пор, пока генерал не попросил возвратить ее. WP I:i:2

a. Pierre was clumsy, stout and uncommonly tall, with huge red hands; he did not, as they say, know how to come into a drawing-room and still less how to get out of one, that is, how to say something particularly agreeable on going away. Moreover, he was dreamy. He stood up, and picking up a three-cornered hat with the plume of a general in it instead of his own, he kept hold of it, pulling the feathers till the general asked him to restore it (CG 34).

b. Pierre was clumsy. He was fat, taller than the average, broad, and had immense red hands; he, as they say, did not know how to enter a parlour, and still less did he know how to come out of it, that is, he did not know how to say something very pleasant before taking his leave. He was, in addition, absent-minded. Upon getting up, he picked up a three-cornered hat with a general's panache instead of his own, and he held it in his hand and kept pulling the panache, until the general asked him to return it to him (LW 5:32).

c. Pierre was ungainly. Stout, about the average height [sic. *My guess is this error is the fault of the printer or proofreader rather than the translators*—CA], broad, with huge red hands; he did not know, as the saying is, how to enter a drawing room and still less how to leave one; that is, how to say something particularly agreeable before going away. Besides this he was absent-minded. When he rose to go, he took up instead of his own, the general's three-cornered hat, and held it, pulling at the plume, till the general asked him to restore it (MM19).

d. Pierre, as we have already said, was awkward. Stout, of more than average height, broad-shouldered, with huge red hands, he had no idea of the proper way to enter a drawing-room, and still less the proper way of making his exit; in other words, he did not know how to make some especially agreeable remark to his hostess before taking his leave. Moreover, he was absent-minded. He got up, and instead of taking his own hat he seized the plumed three-cornered hat of some general and held it, pulling at the feathers until the general came and asked him to surrender it (AK 13).

e. Pierre was ungainly, stout and uncommonly tall, with exceptionally large red hands; as the saying is, he had no idea how to enter a drawing-room and still less of how to get out of one. In other words, he did not know how to make some especially agreeable remark to his hostess before leaving. Moreover, he was absent-minded. He got up and, instead of his own, seized the plumed three-cornered hat of a general and stood holding it, pulling at the plume, until the general claimed it from him (RE 24).

f. Pierre was awkward; above average height, broad and stout, with huge red hands, he did not know how to enter a drawing room, as they say, and still less how to leave one, that is, how to say something particularly agreeable before going. Moreover he was absent-minded. Now when he got up to go he picked up a general's three-cornered hat instead of his own and stood there plucking at the plume till the general asked him to return it (AD 49-50).

g. Pierre was ungainly, stout, quite tall and possessed of huge red hands. It was said of him that he had no idea how to enter a drawing room and was worse still at withdrawing from one, or saying something nice as he left. He was also absent-minded. He stood up now, picked up a general's nicely plumed three-cornered hat instead of his own, and held on to it, pulling at the feathers, until the general asked for it back (Briggs 24)

h. Pierre was clumsy. Fat, unusually tall, broad, with enormous red hands, he did not, as they say, know how to enter a salon, and still less did he know how to leave one, that is, by saying something especially pleasant at the door. Besides that, he was absentminded. Getting up, he took a three-cornered hat with a general's plumage instead of his own and held on to it, plucking at the feathers, until the general asked him to give it back (PV 22).

i. Pierre was ungainly. Fat and broad, with huge hands that seemed to have been made for swinging one-*pood* weights, he had no idea, as they say, of how to enter a salon and even less idea of how to leave it, that is, of how to make his farewells and say something particularly agreeable before his exit. In addition, he was absent-minded. As he stood up, instead of taking his own hat he grabbed hold of a three-cornered hat with a general's panache and held it, tugging at the plume, until the general finally requested him with some animosity, or so it seemed to Pierre, to hand it back. (Bromfield 34—here and always, Bromfield translated a different version of the novel)

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First-Timer Review:
Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Clare Urbanski

Standing in a sea of strangers, in a city 1500 miles from my home, exhausted from traveling all day and yet still disoriented from being late, the foremost thought on my mind after getting my ATA64 badge was: "Do I even belong here?"

I swear I'm not plugging the Slavic Languages Division just because I'm writing this article for *SlavFile*, but it's really true: they were the ones who answered "Yes."

Jumping into the world of freelance translation this year wasn't something I did unprepared or without any idea of what to expect—it had been an ambition of mine for a while. I successfully graduated with a Master's in Translation Studies a few years ago, but this transition nonetheless required overcoming hurdles that felt impossible at times. I still had a full-time position as a localization director at a small company, so I had to carve out space for freelancing setup out of my free time and take time off work to attend the ATA conference. All the time I spent applying for licenses and buying software and building my brand I also spent wondering if it would be worth it. I'm sure I'm not alone in that experience, but it was a rough couple of months, and I was looking forward to getting some professional guidance at ATA64.

The "Buddies Welcome Newbies" event was supposed to take the edge off of the opening reception in terms of how overwhelming it could potentially be for newcomers, and that was exactly why I signed up for it. Unfortunately, the universe had other plans. A snowball effect of delayed flights meant that I got into Miami hours late, and I completely missed the newbies event.

So when I finally arrived at the conference, the opening reception was in full swing, and all I could think was: "How do I start a conversation with anyone?" The hotel terrace was packed, and while it was exciting to see nametags that listed everyone's language pairs (what a relief after spending a few years explaining to everyone I worked with what language pairs *were*), I wasn't sure what reason I had to join any of the groups milling around. It was total freedom and lack of purpose all at once.

After I'd hung around on the sidelines for a bit and gotten some food, however, I suddenly noticed Marisa Irwin, whom I'd gone to grad school with. Given that there was exactly one person I knew out of the more than 1300 attending the conference, beating the odds by spotting her so soon after arriving was pretty incredible. We caught up for a bit, and eventually—as we'd known for years that our overlap language was Russian—she asked if I'd had a chance to join the Slavic Languages Division yet. I said that I'd expressed interest but not officially joined.

"I have to introduce you to everybody!" she said. And that was the moment that everything changed.

Networking, of course, was supposed to be a big part of the conference, but meeting the members of the Slavic Languages Division at the focus groups later that evening ended up being a lot more than that for me. It was both what I expected—I got to make contacts in my industry, talk to them about their work experience, and connect with them on LinkedIn—and more than what I expected. I met (or in Marisa's case, reconnected with) people who had been in my exact situation, which eased my worries about the obstacles in my path; everyone was so willing to share about how difficult things had been in the early stages, especially Marisa and those closer to my age. It turns out that starting a freelance business isn't easy for anyone, especially on top of a full-time job, and their willingness to be vulnerable with me about it gave me confidence that I was on the right path.

I met people with similar personalities to mine, which relieved my fears that I didn't belong; I'm very used to being "the quiet one" at work and sort of a weirdo for it (I was once told in an interview that I "don't have facial expressions"), but I could tell that some of the people I met that evening were also "quiet ones." Even some of the most well-respected members had similar reserved speech patterns and preferences for listening over talking, which struck me because I'd

gotten used to thinking of those traits as undesirable ones that I needed to mask in business settings.

And it was great getting to attend the conference "with" them, in a sense: they ended up being interested in (or presenting) most of the sessions that I was interested in, so I saw them around a lot. It was my first time at a professional or academic event independent of a company or university group, which was both freeing and lonely at times, so it was nice having a group of regulars to compare notes and attend off-site events with.

So to anyone who's considering taking the leap, or who's thinking about attending the ATA Annual Conference in the future, my wholehearted advice would be: find your people, whoever they may be. I had a lot of fears that the SLD alleviated by welcoming me with open arms, and it made my first conference a truly special and memorable experience.

And things are picking up for me and my translation business! I'm happy to say that (while I can't share too many details) I'm currently working on bringing a series of contemporary genre fiction to the USA, which I'm very excited about. A huge thank-you to everyone at ATA64 who helped me overcome my fear of not belonging, because I know now that I'm right where I need to be.

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First-Timer Review: Musings on a Magnificent Meeting of the Minds in Miami

Sarah McDowell

The road to Miami lay straight through the Everglades. Unlike most participants, I did not fly into Miami airport but instead chose to fly from Canada to Atlanta and then rent a car to travel throughout Florida before and after the conference. Besides being my first ATA conference, this was also my first time in Florida, and I was excited to see the natural wonders of the beautiful Sunshine State. On my first day, I walked for hours along the beach in Panama City and saw the sun rise over the water and swam in the Gulf of Mexico. I was amazed by the fine, powdery, white sand, abundance of seashells (that I collected as souvenirs), and the clear waters that were so warm and swimmable (unlike lakes in Canada this summer). The next day, I drove to Crystal River and saw many tropical birds and I also saw manatees for the first time—I was amazed by the grace and kind-hearted nature of these peaceful creatures. The night before the conference, I wanted to be well-rested, so I stayed at a luxe hotel near Anna Maria Island, where the window looked out over a quiet marina, and, in the morning, I saw a manatee swimming near the boats. This was where I treated myself to my first-ever slice of zesty key lime pie and went for a relaxing pre-conference swim in the hotel's outdoor saltwater pool at the end of October (something I definitely wouldn't be able to do in Canada). It was already a trip to remember even before I set foot into ATA64!

I might have diverged a bit with all my trip details, but, after all, I am a translator who specializes in travel & tourism, and besides translating for major online travel booking platforms, tour operators, museums, and hotels, I also travel a lot myself. I have been to many places in Russia and northern Europe (latest trip was Norway). I have participated in translation conferences in Russia and Europe, but, for some reason, I never got around to going to an ATA Annual Conference until this year, although it has always been on my to-do list. I was pleasantly surprised to see some translators in Miami whom I recognized from my first-ever conference in Kazan, Russia back in 2012.

We often hear about the importance of human connection in an era of all things digital. This was my primary motivation for going to Miami. I have been working as a freelance translator for over ten years, and I don't have colleagues sitting beside me. I also don't have any "face time" with my clients except for the occasional online video call since nearly all

communication is done by e-mail. Although I am an introvert, I get lonely and really start to feel sad if I go for long periods without interacting with others. I only found out about ATA64 toward the end of the summer, but it seemed like such a great opportunity to get "out of my shell" and network that I made a snap decision to sign up online at nearly the last minute. In retrospect, this is a decision I don't regret in the least.

Now, back to my drive through the Everglades, where I didn't spot any alligators or panthers, but the multiple road signs indicated that this was certainly a possibility. The thick mangroves suddenly gave way to palm-tree-lined streets and urban activity as I approached the Miami city limits. I noticed more and more signs in Spanish, stores selling Latin American food on every corner, and all the radio stations I was able to receive in the car were playing Latino music. This signalled that a multilingual experience was in store for me in Miami.

The warm Miami air was buzzing with excitement as hundreds of attendees converged upon the Hyatt Regency on a late Wednesday afternoon at the end of October. The registration process for ATA64 went smoothly as I'd already paid online, and I received my badge in a matter of minutes. I had planned to attend the Buddies Welcome Newbies gathering, but, due to heavy traffic, I arrived just as the event was ending. However, I talked to another newcomer, who filled me in on the main points of that session. The opening reception was filled with delicious Latino food, tropical cocktails, high spirits, and a lot of fast-flowing conversation in what seemed like all the world's languages. The presence of so many people all eager to talk to me was a bit unnerving to me as an introvert, especially since it had been over four years since my last conference. Thankfully, a couple of fellow newcomers took me "under their wing," and we talked and ate salad at a table slightly apart from all the hustle and bustle, which helped ease my social anxiety. As the evening went on, I kept being approached by other translators, mostly those also working in the Russian-English language pair (they noticed my languages on my badge). Regarding the conference badges, I'd like to point out that rather than just the city and country, it would have been helpful to also include the state or province people are from because many people mistook the "CA" on my badge to be California rather than Canada.

The first full conference day (Thursday, October 26th) was a whirlwind of activity from 7 a.m. until after 11 p.m., when the Literary Division's After Hours Café drew to a close. I was exhausted (but in a good way) and running purely on adrenaline as I finally collapsed onto my hotel bed that night. I walked to breakfast with my conference roommate, a Korean interpreter and translator, who, after a while, went off to network with familiar colleagues, and I ended up the lone English speaker surrounded by Spanish-speaking colleagues at my table, but perhaps that was part of the fun. Conferences like this are an opportunity to hear other languages being spoken and to be immersed in other cultures besides the culture of our source language that we usually translate about. I must say that listening to them talking a mile a minute in Spanish was exciting even though I didn't understand most of what they were saying (thankfully, they went on to make some efforts to speak in English for me). Thanks to this breakfast, I got to know some great colleagues from places like Argentina, Chile, Spain, Ecuador, and Mexico and even exchange business cards with them.

I went to the Slavic Languages Division's dinner and ate Brazilian food while listening to the riveting accounts of translation lore from more experienced translators and interpreters, who enthusiastically shared highlights and funny moments from their careers. It was fun to finally meet everyone in person after just seeing their names on the list of attendees or "recognizing" them from their LinkedIn profiles. I got so carried away with all the conversations and networking among translators that I didn't even notice that desserts were offered.

As if this wasn't enough excitement for one day, after dinner, I was invited to the aforementioned After Hour's Café, which I was already planning on attending. This was one of my favourite moments of the conference. This café is a literary event, during which translators went up to the front to read excerpts of their non-confidential works, such as a chapter of a fantasy novel or verses of poetry that they had translated into English or written themselves. I was glad to see so many SLD members at this event and listen to and get a "taste" of their translations as well as some of their original works. Towards the end of the evening, the event also opened up to presentations of literary works in other languages, including some in Russian. I also enjoyed hearing prose and poetry in other languages, including the original and emotional Spanish poetry of a local poet. I was asked to read from some of my works, but, unfortunately, these literary pieces were not on my laptop but instead printed on paper, which I forgot to bring with me. But now I have some ideas for the next ATA conference!

Friday brought with it some outstanding content by translation legends who possess a venerable treasure trove of expertise. A personal highlight of the

conference were the back-to-back talks "They Have No Idea: Translation Insiders and Outsiders" presented by Carol Apollonio. Using historical examples, photographs, and witty humor, Carol explained what translation means to those on the "inside" in contrast to how outsiders perceive the translation process. Her talk was so fascinating that an hour went by in a flash, and I actually didn't want it to end. Some on-the-spot translation challenges, including one of the opening passage of Anton Chekhov's "Lady and the Dog," resulted in lively discussions on how best to translate набережная and other Russian words into English.

Besides "business" translation, I also do literary translation and would like to do more of it, so I was really anticipating the session by Will Evans on "How to Sustain the Current US Publishing Boom." Will introduced us to his independent nonprofit publishing house Deep Vellum and gave an inspiring talk about its mission to "bring the world together in conversation through literature." I was surprised to discover that of the 500,000 to 1 million books published annually worldwide, only 3% are translations, and less than 1% are translations of new works. He gave useful and practical advice on how we can make our entrance on the literary scene, or, for those already working with literature, how to get more work in this field and how to establish long-term collaborations with publishers. After his presentation, Will was very helpful as he fielded a myriad of questions from some very keen aspiring literary translators.

On Friday evening, I had the pleasure of being at the Wordfast party and had some tasty food and drinks while socializing with colleagues in a more informal setting. I stayed for a while and then headed back with a friend to the Hyatt for Game Night, which was sponsored by the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, and was a blast. I love playing board games, and this fun evening provided

yet another opportunity to network with colleagues whom we might not have met during the sessions.

I faced a difficult decision on Saturday, when two interesting presentations that I wanted to attend were scheduled at the same time: Vladimir Reznikov's talk on the translation of a book about the war by a Ukrainian author and Eugenia Sokolskaya's presentation on how to make sense of those incoherent combinations of Russian nouns that we often find in complicated source texts. Holding these sessions at the same time was far from ideal. This "double-booking" of Slavic-related presentations, and the fact that it would have been nice to have sessions recorded (sessions were recorded at other conferences I have attended) were basically my only complaints in what was otherwise a well-organized event.

The conference ended on a high note with a closing ceremony, outdoor farewell reception, and dance party at night. I enjoyed the groovy rhythms of the local jazz band and think that live music was a nice touch. I have mixed emotions about closing parties, because, on the one hand, it's nice to rest for a few days after so much frantic activity, but, on the other, it was sad to say "goodbye" to colleagues that I had just met. But that's the way it always is with conferences. So to close, I won't say "goodbye", but rather "до встречи!", as they say in Russian. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Portland next year!

Sarah McDowell is a full-time freelance Russian-to-English translator and English editor specializing in travel & tourism, marketing, cosmetics, arts and culture with 10+ years of experience. She is also a literary translator and has translated both fiction and non-fiction literary works as well as children's books. Her hometown is Winnipeg, Canada, where she is currently based, but she often travels and works remotely from other locations. She has lived, studied, and worked in St. Petersburg, Russia, and enjoys that city's fantastic arts and cultural scene.
Her website is http://sarahmcdowell.ca and she is open to collaboration with other translators.

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65th Annual Conference
OCTOBER 30–NOVEMBER 2, 2024
PORTLAND, OREGON

"Handling Foreign Names, Dialects, and Archaic Language in Complex Jobs"

Presented by Katarzyna Diehl
Reviewed by Steven McGrath

With so many education sessions on offer at the ATA Annual Conference, there is an understandable urge to focus on the presentations that most narrowly fit our specialized areas of work. Furthermore, given the uniqueness of our working languages, there is a corresponding assumption that a presentation concerning a tongue we do not know or work in might not be of use to us. Such thoughts can cause us to overlook discussions of broadly applicable subjects from points of view we've never heard before. There was one such important discussion for the Slavic languages squeezed into the last session slot on Saturday in Miami: Katarzyna Diehl's exploration of the fine points of rendering Polish into English for two scholarly publications raised vital questions that all Slavic language specialists should consider. I, for one, felt that contemplating the issues raised in this talk could benefit my future work.

Katarzyna began by discussing the topic of geographical names, a topic that has us reaching for our style guides with annoying frequency. Should we anglicize addresses (*ulica* or Street)? Should we keep adjectival forms or nominalize them (Pilsudski Square, Pilsudskiego Square or *Plac Piłsudskiego*)? Space constraints preclude my providing all of Katarzyna's preferences and ultimate choices here. Instead, it may be more useful to think of how these dilemmas can apply to your own working languages.

It is worth noting that Katarzyna voiced her support for translating *województwo* as "voivodeship" rather than "province" based on its etymology, from *wojewoda* (military governor) and also because the more familiar option "does not reflect the geographical specificity to indicate that the action is taking place in Poland, and not anywhere else." At that point, I could not help but contrast this with the East Slavic *oblast*, which is virtually always anglicized to "region" (often lowercase) or "province" in translations from Russian but is often transliterated in the context of Ukraine. Is that an effort to preserve geographical specificity in one case but not another? I don't know, but I think it's worth discussing in the wider Slavic-into-English context.

The lack of a common out-of-Slavic-languages approach grew clearer as Katarzyna delved into her work translating the journal *Polish-Jewish Studies.* Yiddish-speaking Jews in interwar Poland generally used the Hebrew alphabet for writing personal names, and the translation team decided to adopt the Polish spelling for people (which they themselves presumably used in many contexts) rather than using one of the English Hebrew-to-Latin script transliteration systems (with the exception of names known internationally under a variant spelling). That is logical and corresponds to common practice for translating out of other languages.

Matters got thornier with regard to the "Eastern Borderlands," i.e., what is now western Ukraine. The team decided to use the contemporary Polish names for places in that region. When I asked if this was the current general practice in Jewish Studies, Katarzyna told me that this was the preference of the publisher and the Polish government, which intended to distribute the publication at its embassies. That strikes me as reason enough. But it makes it difficult to understand why this approach wasn't used for the four voivodeships, which correspond to the current Ukrainian provinces of Lviv, Volyn, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk (Stanislaviv). The contemporary English names were used for these instead.

Katarzyna's other scholarly translation project, *Anthropology and Ethnology During World War II*, involved a study of the Podhale highlanders that contained samples of their local dialect in contrast to standard Polish. The presenter's attention to translation theory and research truly stood out here as she cited one expert after another. To start off, for example, "The founder of Polish translation studies, Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, in his *An Introduction to the Theory of Translation* (1957), qualified dialects as untranslatable." (He was probably right, but sometimes our projects demand the impossible.) Katarzyna accurately laid out the issues involved in rendering these dialectical elements into an existing Anglophone dialect, such as Cockney or Highland Scots English, and explored several theorists' approaches to stylization and annotation. She ultimately used a combined strategy, starting the passages in the Podhale dialect with a translator's note, then lowering the register and creating a stylized dialect with mixed artificial (θ becomes f, ð becomes v for "th" sounds) and real-world (dropped h) phonetic elements. We must admire Katarzyna's courage!

Being less concerned with theory, I couldn't help but think of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Mark Twain's ingenious use of dialect. Huck's dialect in particular is hardly consistent or historical but seemingly more of a composite of everything his parents and teachers told him not to do with language, everything that was just a bit too *local*. Twain would go on to play with archaisms, or, rather, lampoon Scott and Tennyson's attempts at archaisms, in his *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

In 1936, the Polish government reformed the state language, most notably in the spoken form, by simplifying the case system. As you might expect, many people went on speaking with the same grammar they had always used, but the new system came to predominate later in the twentieth century. Katarzyna explained why she wanted to preserve the archaisms in first-person accounts: "One might claim that it is unimportant what ending a witness uses, but it means something: That individual traits characterize her speech, that she is accustomed to using pre-reform endings, maybe even holds on to prewar convictions and values that her idiolect represents." I'm not convinced that a person's idiolect need reflect anything more than custom, but an explanatory annotation in a scholarly article, as Katarzyna suggests, wouldn't do any harm.

Katarzyna also gave the surely facetious suggestion that the Old English inflection system be used to convey its Polish equivalent. While the two can be considered grammatically parallel, the chronology, the connotations, and the comprehensibility to readers are totally different: Virtually every Polish speaker was using the old cases 100 years ago, while the English case endings were already heading to the exits 1,000 years ago. You'd be much safer looking for appropriate archaisms in Scott, Tennyson, or even Twain ("Good land!").

And Katarzyna did seem to look to the English literary tradition in the last segment of her presentation, when she generously showed us her translations of pre-reform poetry. I enjoyed that, and I'd like to share an example below. Overall, thank you, Katarzyna, for boldly sharing your approaches to complex issues of translation, issues I hope we can all discuss further at future conferences, from the Polish-into-English perspective.

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(website: www.mcgrathtranslations.com).
He is currently serving as the SLD's Administrator.

Julian Tuwim, **Wspomnienie** (1921) Polish:	Julian Tuwim, **Memory** (1931) English:
Mimozami jesień się zaczyna, Złotawa krucha i miła. To Ty, to Ty jesteś ta dziewczyna, Która do mnie na ulicę wychodziła.	With mimosas, autumn begins, Golden, frail and fine. It is you, you are that girl Who would run out into the street for me.
Od Twoich listów pachniało w sieni, Gdym wracał zdyszany ze szkoły, A po ulicach w lekkiej jesieni Fruwały za mną jasne anioły.	The scent of your letters filled the hallway When I came home from school, breathless, And down the streets, amid light autumn, Bright angels fluttered after me.
Mimozami zwiędłość przypomina Nieśmiertelnik żółty – październik. To Ty, to Ty moja jedyna, Przychodziłaś wieczorem do cukierni.	With mimosas, the golden everlasting – October – Reminds me of the withering. It is you, you, my only one, Who visited the confectioner's in the evening.
Z przemodlenia z przeomdlenia senny, W parku płakałem szeptanymi słowy. Młodzik z chmurek prześwitywał jesienny, Od mimozy złotej – majowy.	Out of this overpraying, out of this overswooning, drowsy, I was crying, in the park, with whispered words. The crescent moon shone through the clouds, autumnal, And from a golden mimosa it glowed as in May.
Ach, czułymi, przemiłymi snami Zasypiałem z nim gasnącym o poranku, W snach dawnymi bawiąc się wiosnami, Jak tą złotą, jak tą wonną wiązanką...	Ah, with tender, amiable dreams I fell asleep with him fading in the morning, Playing in dreams with the springs gone, As with this golden, as with this fragrant bouquet...

"Making Coherent English out of a Pile of Russian Nouns"

Presented by Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya
Reviewed by Marisa Irwin

Anyone who has been around Russian (or French or German, for that matter!) long enough knows that those languages seem to have a deep love affair with nouns. It's like they're collecting them, displaying them proudly in their linguistic trophy cabinet. Meanwhile, for us English speakers, it's all about the verbs—our language is action-packed, lively, and ready to flit across the page. So how exactly are you, as the translator, supposed to come to terms with this? Should you simply stick as closely to the Russian as possible? You can try, but you'll probably end up with an endless series of noun phrases that result in word salad. There has to be a better way to recreate the Russian meaning in English …

Enter Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya, our fearless guide through the Russian-English translation maze. In her presentation "Making Coherent English out of a Pile of Russian Nouns" she didn't just point out the problem; she handed us a map to avoid getting lost in the labyrinth of Russian nouns.

Eugenia began her presentation by posing a simple question: "Who knows Russian?" This seemingly innocuous query would be the gateway to unraveling the complexities of intelligibly translating Russian nouns into English.

The Russian-English Challenge

Eugenia's case study for the presentation was a bilingual table sent to her from a marketing website for a piece of software. Each segment, when observed in isolation, seemed harmless. However, when stitched together, they formed a whole that could only be described as "soul-crushing." The challenge was clear—make sense of this linguistic puzzle without succumbing to the temptation of mindlessly matching the source.

Denominalization Defined

Before Eugenia went into specific strategies, she first defined denominalization so we were all on the same page. Denominalization is essentially the process of turning heavy-footed Russian nouns into nimble English verbs. It's the process of "removing, reducing nouns, and more broadly remembering that different languages use parts of speech differently," as Eugenia stated. It's a pragmatic strategy that helps navigate the divergence between the two languages and ensures that the translation isn't a clunky parade of Russian nouns but a seamless adaptation that suits the English language's penchant for action-oriented expressions.

Denominalization Strategies Unveiled

Eugenia's guiding principle echoed through her slides: "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should." She then took us through a series of ingenious strategies to breathe life into the seemingly lifeless Russian noun.

#1 Replace It with a Verb: Eugenia's first strategy was an obvious one (especially in light of the definition of denominalization she had just given

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya at ATA64.
Photo: Marisa Irwin. Used with permission.

us!)—replace Russian nouns with verb-derived alternatives. For example, "... реагируя **на открытие** в Литве представительства Тайваня" can be translated as "... as a reaction to a Taiwanese representative office **opening** in Lithuania." Sometimes, you just have to break up the noun party and let verbs lead the way in your translations.

#2 Replace Everything with a Verb: In this strategy, Eugenia showcased the power of parallelism in lists, emphasizing how converting entire sets of nouns into verbs not only aligns with English writing conventions but also enhances overall flow.

#3 Take It Out: Like a seasoned detective, Eugenia encouraged us to question the relevance of each word. Using Natalia Strelkova's framework from her book *Introduction to Russian-English Translation*, we learned to categorize words as either key or prop, identifying common culprits ripe for omission. These included words like вопрос (the issue of...), сфера/область, дело, and явление, as well as weak process nouns (осуществление, обеспечение, проведение).

#4 Strengthen Your Verb: Eugenia masterfully demonstrated the art of moving meaning from key nouns to prop verbs (e.g., осуществлять контроль > monitor or вызвать недоумение > appall).

#5 Replace It with a Question Word: Embedding question words within subordinate clauses, Eugenia's fifth strategy, turned complex Russian constructions into English counterparts with ease. Trigger words became our guiding lights in this linguistic maze.

Trigger Words	Question Word to Consider
Манера, способ	How
Степень, объём	How much
Время, срок, момент	When
Наличие, присутствие, факт	Whether
Причина	Why
Личность	Who

#6 Replace It with a Subordinate Clause: If you have a noun with an accompanying possessive noun or pronoun, you might be looking at a complete subordinate clause (... that...). So "... на фоне сообщений **о его ранении**" becomes "... amid reports **that he had been wounded**."

#7 Replace It with an Adjective or Adverb: Eugenia's last strategy challenged us to discern whether a noun was merely an adjective in disguise.

"**Беспрецедентность** нынешнего конфликта – в степени его публичности" can be turned into "**What is unprecedented** about this conflict is how public it is."

As a testament to the effectiveness of these strategies, Eugenia then gave us a chance to apply them using sentences from her initial case study. The before-and-after transformation showcased the power of intentional translation over mindless matching.

Beyond the strategies, Eugenia's persona shone brightly throughout the presentation. She effortlessly injected a subtle sense of humor into a potentially tedious topic, including her audience in a lively discussion as peers rather than as passive recipients of prescriptive knowledge.

Mastering Denominalization: A Key to Effective Translations

Navigating the labyrinth of Russian-English translation challenges requires a keen understanding of denominalization. This approach allows us to sidestep the pitfalls of creating translations that are too literal and resemble a never-ending chain of nouns. For a deeper dive into the strategies as well as specific examples, I encourage you to explore the full presentation and accompanying handout, available on the SLD website.

Happy denominalizing!

Marisa Irwin is a Russian and German to English translator who specializes in breathing life into historical documents, particularly those in Kurrent and Sütterlin scripts. Holding an MA in translation from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Marisa combines academic expertise with a passion for preserving the past. She serves on the ATA Membership Committee and as editor of the SLD's blog. She can be reached at mirwin@mlitranslate.com.

"Two Language Pairs in Time of War:
How Two Russian Translators Started Working with Ukrainian"

Presented by Natalia Postrigan and Steven McGrath
Reviewed by Shelley Fairweather-Vega

The Slavic Languages Division's incoming leadership duo, Steven McGrath (Administrator) and Natalia Postrigan (Assistant Administrator), presented this fascinating session about their experience learning Ukrainian and adding it as a new working language. Initially inspired and informed by an online Ukrainian language course they took together beginning in February 2021 from the NovaMova School of Languages and Area Studies, in the time since, both presenters have made Ukrainian part of their professional portfolios, in different ways and to different extents. As translators already working between Russian and English, Steve and Natalia were able to take advantage of NovaMova's course in Ukrainian that is designed specifically for English speakers who know Russian. The Ukrainian and Russian languages are similar enough in syntax and vocabulary that familiarity with Russian provides a solid head start for students undertaking this accelerated program in Ukrainian, which concentrates on the differences between the languages. These are also substantial.

The first half of the presentation focused on the history of the Slavic languages and the different influences, from east and west, that shaped the development of Ukrainian and Russian. A summary of that history prompted some debate in the audience: Were Russian-speakers or Ukrainian-speakers more literate at different points in history? Who spoke the Russian-Ukrainian mix called Surzhyk? Is the term Surzhyk derogatory or was that lingo a point of pride? How are perceptions of these topics changing in light of the war?

The historical survey was followed by a shorter but equally interesting "Part 2" of the presentation, on the practical topic of expanding a translator's set of working languages. The presenters began this section with some encouragement, pointing out that if we're qualified to translate *into* our usual target language, then we're halfway to being qualified to translate *from* a new language—all we have to do, they told us, is learn that language. Of course, there are different degrees to which we can "know" a language, and imperfect, passive, or receptive knowledge of a source language can be enough to translate from it in certain circumstances.

Achieving sufficient mastery is simpler when the new language is related to one we already know, thanks to cognates and familiar grammatical patterns. Because of those similarities, the speakers noted, editing translations from Ukrainian can be a simple matter for someone used to editing translations from Russian, because machine translation engines and human translators make similar mistakes when translating those languages into English. Identical grammatical constructs can be manipulated into good English using identical translation techniques, and many cultural references are similar, as well. Still, translators working from both languages must remain aware of varying biases that appear in AI and MT translations and be savvy enough to navigate potential minefields in localization and translation when it comes to culturally and historically sensitive terminology.

Implicitly, the presentation made one additional point that seems vital to me: The Slavic-language world (in language services, but also every other field, from anthropology to literature to politics) has been so thoroughly dominated by the Russian language for so long that ideas from speakers of other languages need to shout to be heard. Ironically enough, it's now, in the wake of a Russian campaign intending to deny Ukraine and Ukrainians the right to independent existence, that the Ukrainian language is enjoying heightened attention. Happily for translators, that new attention is increasing the demand for linguistic services in "new" languages foregrounded by the war, Ukrainian most of all. Understandably, however, it also brings questions and misunderstandings as the world sorts out fact from fiction and untangles centuries of propaganda, old and new. It's encouraging to see translators bravely joining the struggle in a very practical way and to know our colleagues are engaged in the historical linguistic questions that have a new urgency today.

Shelley Fairweather-Vega, CT translates from Russian and Uzbek, languages which do not resemble one another. She is currently the administrator of the ATA Literary Division and lives in Seattle, Washington. She can be reached at translation@fairvega.com.

"Invasion: The Story of a Book Risen from the Ashes"

Presented by Vladimir Reznikov, Margarita Sotnikova, and Steven McGrath
Reviewed by Larry Bogoslaw

This engaging presentation, conceived and led by ATA-certified translator and court-certified interpreter Vladimir Reznikov, promised to tell the story of how a collection of narratives and impressions from the Ukraine war was translated into English and produced as a book, titled *Invasion and the Civilian: A Wartime Journal from Ukraine*. In reality, however, this session delivered much more than it promised: It was about much more than a book. It addressed the lived experience of war; the multifaceted roles of writing as historical recording, recreation of sensory experience, and therapy; and, ultimately, the human will to establish some form of stability and normalcy even under the most adverse conditions.

Attendees who arrived early were treated to a pre-presentation short film in Ukrainian (subtitled in English), narrated from the viewpoint of a young woman remembering her peaceful, pastoral girlhood in Ukraine and describing how the life she knew was destroyed by invading Russian soldiers and their

Left to right: Sotnikova, Bogoslaw, McGrath, and Reznikov under a Miami palm in the conference hotel. Published with permission.

weapons. The filmmaker, Antonina Sotnikova, used a notably gentle touch with the visual effects, emphasizing the beauty of natural scenery rather than the violence perpetrated by human beings.

The presentation itself began with Vladimir introducing Margarita Sotnikova (who happens to be the filmmaker's mother), a Ukrainian educator who became a volunteer with a children's relief organization. Margarita told, in Russian, the harrowing story of how she and her team evacuated hundreds of children from a war-torn area and resettled them in a school, taking care of their needs morning and night. This account was both a gripping narrative and a golden opportunity for Vladimir to show off his consecutive interpreting skills: He typically waited for Margarita to speak several long sentences at a time before delivering their content in precise, accurate and detailed English.

During the next part of the talk, Vladimir explained how the *Invasion* book was composed of 13 narratives like Margarita's, in which Ukrainian people give immediate, first-person accounts of how the war has affected their daily lives. Eventually, he added, the book grew to include more material from the author who had collected the narratives, Alena Vasilchenko. Alena's own writing delves into the difficult-to-describe mix of emotions evoked by the relentless day-to-day experience of war and even offers some advice on how to handle this experience.

Vladimir also recounted the arduous "labor of love" of translation (the first draft was done by his mother, Natasha Geilman, a seasoned translator and entrepreneur), followed by editing and intense quality-checking and consultation. Even the book title changed several times, both in the original Russian and in English! Then he introduced ATA-certified translator and Slavic Division Administrator Steven McGrath, who served as the main editor.

Steve noted that producing the English version of *Invasion* presented challenges on several levels, beginning with the genre. After all, the collection is really several books in one: Besides war memoirs collected from others, it comprises the author's thematically arranged essays that form tapestries of her own impressions, a "therapy journal," and advice for "ordinary civilians."

Steve went on to explain some stylistic and vocabulary challenges presented by the book. For example, the series of imperatives in the advice section had to be rendered accurately without coming off as too brusque or demanding. One difficult lexical decision was finding an equivalent for the Russian *отвалите*, in the sense of not pressuring or criticizing oneself and others. The editing team eventually decided on "lay off." Other lexical challenges arose from the abundance of sensory impressions, especially auditory ones, where it was difficult to convey certain sensations that most readers (at least, the lucky ones) have not experienced—such as the sound of a building collapsing three blocks away. The narratives also posed classic terminology conundrums: For example, the frequently used word *обстрел* can refer to both artillery shelling and a missile strike, and the translator must be sensitive to context in interpreting which meaning is intended.

As a final surprise for attendees, Vladimir enlisted an accomplice (yours truly) to produce a guitar "out of nowhere" and start playing Bulat Okudzhava's song "Союз друзей" ("Union of Friends"). As the words scrolled down the projection screen, in the original Russian and Vladimir's English translation, attendees began to sing along, and—in a touching moment—the entire group joined hands as we sang the chorus, "Возьмемся за руки, друзья…" The Soviet bard himself would have been proud!

Larry Bogoslaw is part of a hereditary line of language nerds. After studying Latin, Spanish, and German, he earned an M.A. in Italian (University of Connecticut) and a Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures (University of Michigan). Larry directs the Minnesota Translation Laboratory, a community language service he co-founded in 1996, and also heads East View Press, an independent academic publisher. Larry has taught Russian and translation courses at various colleges and universities in Minnesota, and currently serves as Grader Trainer for the ATA Certification Program. For fun, he likes translating poetry and songs.

Farewell to SlavFile?

Nora Seligman Favorov

I can still remember the excitement I felt as I read the first issue of *SlavFile* that landed in my mailbox—my physical mailbox, that is, which was much less cluttered with a mix of junk, requests, reminders, and interesting reading than the mailboxes into which *SlavFile* is now delivered. I had recently transitioned from playing with translation (translating verses from *Eugene Onegin* and passages from *Master and Margarita* for the sheer pleasure of it) to taking on paid assignments.

SlavFile readers can empathize with that uplifting sense of discovery when you first start trying to move meaning from one language to another—discovery of the complexities of language and human thought. I was alternating between the euphoria of linguistic epiphany and frustration over the challenges involved in fully understanding and then accurately and appropriately rendering my clients' Russian texts into equivalent English, and I wasn't in touch with any colleagues I could discuss these ups and downs with. I didn't *have* any colleagues. But that first issue of *SlavFile* gave me a sense of being part of a community of people all in the throes of that same discovery/frustration dichotomy I was experiencing. That issue was Summer 1997. I attended my first conference in 1998 and haven't missed one since.

I'm proud of at least one innovation I brought to *SlavFile* during my relatively brief tenure as editor: the "Focus on" issues, which allowed us to show, at least once a year, that our division isn't utterly dominated by Russian.

But I have to admit: I miss the old *SlavFile*. For one thing, there was a lot more humor in *SlavFile* in the old days, primarily thanks to its longtime editor, Lydia Razran Stone, who had a gift for noticing and squirreling away anything remotely related to Slavic<>English translation that could evoke a chuckle for use in her column "*SlavFile* Lite: Not by Wordcount Alone."

I'd like to give our newer readers a taste of "*SlavFile* Lite" and what the newsletter lost when Lydia stepped down as editor. Her material came from many sources, but her keen eye for linguistic treasures turned her daily newspaper, *The Washington Post*, into a gold mine. Here's a tidbit from the Winter 2001 issue:

> *The Washington Post* continues to provide me with material for this column. I have before me a coupon that I clipped from the Sunday advertising section for a cleanser called Zud. I can think of few less desirable names for such a product than a word meaning "Itch" in one of the world's major languages. On the other hand, can the people who dream up the names for cleansers and such really be expected to research what these seeming nonsense syllables mean in 10 or 20 languages? (Actually, for

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SlavFile — PRZEKŁADY
NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION
https://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/
THE ITI POLISH NETWORK NEWSLETTER
https://www.iti.org.uk/
Spring 2022 Vol. 31, No. 2
Issue 5 Spring 2022

Welcome to Trans-Atlantyk!
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ITI'S POLISH NETWORK AND ATA'S SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION
Kate Sotejeff-Wilson, Peter Nicholson, Nora Seligman Favorov

Our mutual endeavor grew out of a desire for the editors of *SlavFile* (newsletter of the American Translators Association's Slavic Languages Division) to produce a "Focus on Polish" issue. Peter Nicholson, a Poland-based British member of both the UK's Institute of Translation and Interpreting and ATA's SLD, suggested we could enrich the issue by joining forces with ITI's Polish Network, which also produces a newsletter for its membership—*Przekłady*, of which Kate Sotejeff-Wilson is editor.

We hope that this joint issue of the two newsletters represents the beginning of a "beautiful friendship," and that our two organizations will continue to collaborate and contribute to each other's publications.

Within these pages, you will find items for every taste and mood. First, we can all draw inspiration from two interviews with prolific and highly regarded Polish>English literary translators: one by **Kasia Beresford** with **Antonia Lloyd-Jones** and another by Kate with **Jennifer Croft**. History buffs will take pleasure in Peter's detailed behind-the-scenes story of Poland's national anthem, the **Dąbrowski Mazurka**, and its various more and (often) less successful renderings into English. Also on the scholarly side, involving groundbreaking subject matter for the ivory tower, Nottingham-based **Jack Benjamin** shares his research into approaches to translating Ponglish—a unique interplay of Polish and English that poses special challenges for translators, with examples of how he overcame them. On the practical side, we have an article about ATA's Certification Program written by members of both the Polish>English and English>Polish grader groups filled with tips and examples. Readers looking for new strategies for improving their translation and/or interpretation practice will benefit from an article by **Karolina Pawlak** and **Arkadiusz Kaczorowski** drawing attention to ways in which the ubiquity of English has created a particular class of "**Common Problems in English>Polish Translation.**" We are grateful to **Alicja Tokarska** and **Aleksandra Chlon** for sharing their experiences participating in the European Parliament's translator training program in Luxembourg, including some specific examples of lessons learned. And lastly, in a truly collaborative column, SlavFile editor emerita **Lydia Razran Stone** teamed up with the Polish-language editor at *Przekłady*, Julita Hille, to produce a Polish-focused idioms column, in this case demystifying "Evil Twins"—English idioms with shared words but very different meanings—featuring Polish translations and explanations.

As co-editors we learned a great deal about our colleagues' practices and professionalism on both sides of the pond, and look forward to seeing how the seeds we planted together grow and bear fruit. Życzymy przyjemnej lektury!

ATA 63rd Annual Conference
October 12-15, 2022 ● Los Angeles, California

SlavFile — Spring 2021 Vol. 30, No. 2
NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION
www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/

WELCOME TO SLAVFILE'S FOCUS ON LEGAL ISSUE
Nora Seligman Favorov, Managing Editor

When we called for submissions pertaining to Slavic<>English legal translation and interpretation, we could not have imagined the riches that were about to come our way. If we have a regret, it is the absence of material pertaining to Slavic languages other than Russian. Stay tuned for future "Focus" issues designed to remedy that lack. Meanwhile, it is our hope and belief that this issue will engage and edify all our readers, whatever their language pairs and areas of specialization.

First of all, we are honored to have two items from **Victor Prokofiev**, an interview conducted by **Elizabeth Adams** and a discussion of the term *uzkar*. The picture you see here should be sufficient to pique your curiosity. The theme of interpreting and translating for the courtroom (one of many touched on in the Prokofiev interview) permeates the issue. We are pleased to have a first-time contribution from **Michael Kapitonoff** offering some engagingly couched advice for anyone embarking on a career in that field. And all of us working between Russian and English—in or out of the field of law—should read and keep **Tom Fennell's** glossary of legal terms, conveniently broken down into categories and including enlightening explanations. An article by

Left to right, Senator Joe Biden, Prokofiev, and Supreme Soviet Chairman Andrei Gromyko in the Kremlin, January 1988, during the START ratification process.
Eduard Pesov/TASS

what they probably get paid, I don't see why not, but perhaps that is beside the point.) Here at last is a use for all those automatic translation programs we keep hearing about and one to which they might be almost equal. People proposing names for new consumer products could pass them through translation programs for major languages to ensure that no untoward connotations are being evoked.

Some of her most engaging writing came in the form of cross-cultural insight (always with a hint of the aforementioned humor). Here's an example from the Fall 2001 issue:

> Some weeks ago my friend Raffik called my attention to a linguistic discrepancy between Russian and English that is as revealing of deep cultural differences as any I have yet encountered. In the U.S., if someone coughs, chokes, gasps, or makes some other sound or gesture indicative of malaise, the typical thing to say is "Are you OK/alright?" In precisely the same situation a Russian asks in a tone of deep concern, "Вам/тебе плохо?" While in certain contexts an American might say something on the order of "Aren't you feeling well?" it is almost ludicrous to imagine a Russian speaker asking, "Вам хорошо?" This is a clear indicator of what those of us who deal with both cultures have long sensed: in Russian culture, commiseration is valued and emphasized over encouragement, while in the U.S. the opposite is strongly true. This was brought home to me again recently when my friend Oksana, a medical resident, broke her foot and found out at almost the same time that she had passed her residency exam, the last real academic hurdle on the way to becoming a full-fledged U.S. doctor. After her first few days back at the

Lydia and Nora at the 2012 ATA Annual Conference in San Diego. Published with permission.

> hospital on crutches, she told me, perplexed and even slightly offended, that everyone immediately congratulated her on passing the test but asked how her foot was only as an afterthought, if at all. As a Russian, she anticipated a different reaction and considered this one inappropriate. Her response confirmed my analysis of the linguistic and cultural phenomenon.

> ...Several weeks afterward ... [in] the lobby of her apartment building I heard the following conversation in English between her and a neighbor, involving three differing meanings of the phrase "to be off." Neither was aware that they kept misunderstanding each other. I am certain that I alone was privy to what was meant and what was actually understood.

> Neighbor (seeing Oksana and having been told she was going to Russia in a few days): Are you off, then? (off = about to go on a trip)

SlavFile Mailbox

I'd like to congratulate Lydia, Nora, Galina, and the rest of the *SlavFile* team on a truly remarkable achievement. More than any other single resource, *SlavFile* helped define what it meant to be a translator or interpreter into or out of Slavic languages. Between its pages, the Slavic Language Division was Slavic in more than name only. New translators introduced themselves, old-timers shared their knowledge, and people of all experience levels learned from reviews of ATA conference sessions. Everyone who contributed to the *SlavFile* knew they were doing their share to maintain the standards of our profession and lend their voice to our industry. I'd like to personally thank the *SlavFile* team for carefully editing my own contributions and keeping me from making a fool out of myself. *SlavFile* was truly the best that ATA can be, and I will miss it very much.   *-John Riedl*

Oksana (who had previously been working 60-hour weeks and was acutely aware of her enforced absence from work due to her injury): I am always off these days. (off = not obliged or permitted to go to work)

Neighbor (laughs appreciatively, impressed that a non-native English speaker could make such a subtle play on words): Oh no, not at all. (having interpreted off = not normal, slightly crazy)

How often do such misunderstandings occur in our lives but pass unnoticed for lack of an eavesdropping linguist?

The following excerpt (Summer 2006) tells you something about Lydia's biography and also her gift for storytelling:

> To understand this story you have to know about one of my mother's traits (one of my least favorite of her traits, but one that seems forgivable in retrospect). She liked to ensure that the people she met were impressed by the general illustriousness of her family—my father and me. Though I would not say she lied exactly, she portrayed our accomplishments at such length and in such a golden light that they were scarcely recognizable. For example, it was true that during some summers of my college years I accompanied my father to the Soviet Union, where he had a grant to study Soviet psychophysiology. Indeed while there, I did meet and have dinner with some fairly illustrious scientists, of the sort who had institutes named after them. However, my interactions with them were largely limited to my greeting them prettily in Russian, whereupon they kissed me on the forehead, called me a милая девочка (because of my small girth and long hair, Soviets were always taking me for younger than I was), and then dispatched some minion, or in one case a grandson, to show me the sights, while they talked with my father. However, to hear my mother tell of this admittedly unusual experience, you would have thought that at the age of 17, I had addressed a plenary session of the Academy of Sciences in perfect Russian.

> Some time in the early 1990s, when the SLD was just a SIG (Special Interest Group), Susana [Greiss, founder of our division] cajoled me into writing a profile of myself for its newsletter. I cranked something out that I felt was fairly acceptable. Thus I was quite surprised when Susana called me several weeks after I had submitted it to say, in injured tones, that she was very disappointed in it and in me. It seems she had met my mother at an Elder Hostel weekend somewhere near New York. When Susana had mentioned that she was working with Russian translators, my mother asked if she knew me and the flood gates opened. Why, Susana wanted to know, had I written such a dry and pedestrian profile, leaving out all of the exciting events and accomplishments my mother had told her about?

And another tidbit from the same column recalling those blissful days when we thought we didn't have to worry about machines taking away our jobs:
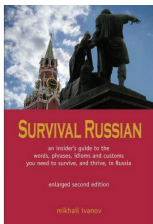
> Last spring, some of us were lucky enough to receive a message from Igor Vesler recommending we visit the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority website (www.mta. nyc.ny.us, click on the Russian flag) if we

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INTERVIEW WITH *SURVIVAL RUSSIAN* AUTHOR MIKHAIL IVANOV
Interview conducted by Lydia Razran Stone

LRS: Could you tell us something about yourself and your background? In particular, how did you acquire such excellent English?

MI: I inherited my passion for languages from my mom Liliya, who, back in the 1950s mastered French on a "barter deal," i.e., exchanging language lessons with a French native while she was an MGU student. If only I had been as lucky with English as I was with my French... Learning French—my first foreign language—was a piece of cake because I learnt it as babies do: when I was six, I entered a French school in Morocco (my Mom and Dad worked in the Soviet General consulate in Casablanca). Thus, the first words I wrote were in French, not in Russian. When I returned to the Soviet Union in 1970, I had a hard time adapting to Soviet school realities. I pursued my French studies in college in Paris in the 1970s and later at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages. I worked as a French translator and interpreter. However, although I seemed destined to make a career out of French, an irony of fate led me to become a columnist in English, thanks to a magazine published in a U.S. state with a French name (Vermont).

My English—yes, we are getting there finally—was really poor. Like most students from the French section of the interpreters'
Continued on page 3

SURVIVAL RUSSIAN
an insider's guide to the words, phrases, idioms and customs you need to survive, and thrive, in Russia
enlarged second edition
mikhail ivanov

American Translators Association
48th Annual Conference
San Francisco, California
Hyatt Regency San Francisco
October 31–November 3 2007

Inside:

The Slavic Languages Division annual banquet at Creole House in New Orleans during ATA59

PHOTO: Galina Raff

In this issue:

ATA59 featured a free dictionary exchange containing a large selection of Slavic dictionaries

Dictionary Exchange   ATA59

PHOTO: Jeff Sanfacon, American Translators Association

INTERVIEW WITH OUR 2019 GREISS SPEAKER: BORIS DRALYUK
Nora Seligman Favorov

We are thrilled that this year's Greiss Lecture will be delivered by Boris Dralyuk, a literary translator, Executive Editor of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and—through his blog and writings in the LARB—what you might describe in Russia as a руб_ашнер (of the essayist rather than the false-cognate variety). He earned his doctorate in Slavic Languages and Literatures at UCLA, where he was mentored by our 2002 Greiss speaker, the late Michael Henry Heim. He went on to teach at UCLA, as well as at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, before turning to full-time translation, writing, and editing.

His work has appeared in a long list of top-tier publications, including *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New Yorker*, *London Review of Books*, and *The Guardian*. He is the author of *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze 1907-1934* (Brill, 2012) and translator of several volumes from Russian and Polish, including, most recently, Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry* (Pushkin Press, 2015) and *Odessa Stories* (Pushkin Press, 2016), Andrey Kurkov's *The Bickford Fuse* (MacLehose Press, 2016), and Mikhail Zoshchenko's *Sentimental Tales* (Columbia University Press, 2018). He is also the editor of *1917: Stories and Poems from the Russian Revolution* (Pushkin Press, 2016) and co-editor, with Robert Chandler and Irina Mashinski, of *The Penguin Book of Russian Poetry* (Penguin Classics, 2015). He received first prize in the 2011 Compass Translation Award competition and, with Irina Mashinski, first prize in the 2012 Joseph Brodsky/Stephen Spender Translation Prize competition.

Dralyuk will be giving two talks at ATA60 in Palm Springs: his Greiss Lecture, "A Guided Journey: The Importance of Mentorship" (Friday, October 25, 11:15) and "It's Got Flavor: Translating Odessa" (Thursday, October 24, 3:30 PM).

Among the many fine things by Boris Dralyuk available on-line, we recommend his article about Los Angeles's Russian past published in the LARB.

Boris Dralyuk

In this issue:

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wanted to amuse ourselves with an untouched-by-human-hands, machine-translated website. This recommendation was more than worthwhile: for example, the first page refers to the Long Island Rail Road as Длинная Дорога Рельса Острова. At the time I received this message I was totally astonished at the general outrage that seemed to be felt because some immigrant groups had translated our national anthem into Spanish. In my view the only danger in doing this was that, if the translation was a good one, the number of people in this country who actually were able to parse the lyrics might hit double digits. I was thus moved to go to the website providing the translation used on the MTA site and input the first lines of "The Star-Spangled Banner" into their Russian translation program. What emerged was: Oh, мнение, можете вы увидеть, светом рассвета предыдущим, настолько самолюбиво мы окликнули с поблескивать сумерк последний? We can all sleep easy. Clearly the threat of machine translation to our professional livelihood is about equal to the threat posed to the U.S. of translating our national anthem into Spanish.

And from Winter 2003:

Here is a bilingual anecdote from my remote past, long-forgotten and undoubtedly brought to mind by the fact that, in my recent efforts to translate Pushkin's "Lines on Insomnia," I have been thinking long and hard about the exact range of meanings covered by the Russian word «трепетание». While I was pregnant with my first child I was studying for my Russian literature comprehensive exams and immersed in 19th-century poetry in which said word figures heavily, to say the least. Thus when I first felt my baby moving around, it was perhaps natural that this was the first word I thought of to describe this hard to classify fluttering sensation. At my next doctor's appointment I asked if it was too early for me to be feeling "life." He responded judiciously, "Well, what does it feel like?" Realizing that I had no ready English description and not yet adept at producing instant translations, I blurted out the first similar sounding word that came to mind. "Trepidation," I said to his amazement.

Long-time SlavFile Layout editor Galina Raff

These are just a few examples I was able to dig up in the limited time I had available. Really, what we need is a "Best of *SlavFile* Lite" or even a "Best of *SlavFile*" compilation. Perhaps I will at least continue to dig and turn these nuggets into blog posts.

In closing, I'd like to say it was not just Lydia who made *SlavFile* such fabulous reading. There were many wonderful contributors. I'm hesitant to start naming them, since I'll undoubtedly leave out numerous deserving names, but two of my favorite columns were Raphy Alden's "The Slovist" and Liv Bliss's "Beginner's Luck." And then there were the contributions by award-winning author Laura Wolfson, who served as assistant editor back in *SlavFile*'s early days, and all the information about the beautiful translations of South Slavic poets provided by Martha Kosir over many years.

One last name must be mentioned: We should all give a standing ovation to Galina Raff, who served as *SlavFile*'s layout editor from its earliest days, as far back as 1994, when she took that task over from its first editor, the late, great Christina Sever, and gave *SlavFile* its distinctive and professional look.

In short, whether or not anyone steps up to continue editing *SlavFile*, I hope that people will continue to dig into the *SlavFile* archive. There is plenty of treasure to be found there: glossaries, articles about aspects of most if not all the Slavic languages, plenty of translated poetry, history, culture, anecdotes about our profession...

With or without *SlavFile*, please, dear colleagues: continue producing articles to share your experience and expertise with your colleagues. A major part of the job of *SlavFile* editor is soliciting (begging for, cajoling, wheedling) submissions from busy colleagues. The role of cajoler-in-chief now falls to our division's blog editor.

Nora Seligman Favorov is a Russian-to-English translator specializing in Russian literature and history. Her translation of *Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator* by Oleg Khlevniuk (Yale, 2015) was selected as Pushkin House UK's "best Russian book in translation" for 2016 and her translation of Sofia Khvoshchinskaya's 1863 novel *City Folk and Country Folk* (Columbia, 2017) was recognized by the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages as "Best Literary Translation into English" for 2018. She serves as translation editor for *Russian Life* magazine and has been chief editor of *SlavFile* since 2021. Her translation of Yevgeny Bukhin's short story "Vasily Vasilyevich Catov" appeared in *New England Review* (vol. 42, no. 2, 2021). For the time being, she plans to primarily focus on translating the "Russian Brontës," the Khvoshchinskaya sisters.