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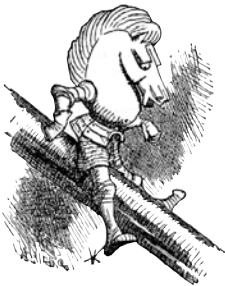
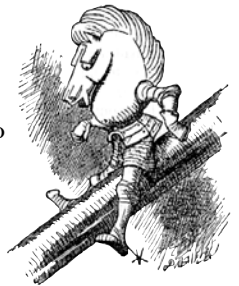
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On the cover: from Sempé's De L'Autre Coté du Miroir. See p. 39.



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In this issue, our Spring meeting speakers at San Diego State University discuss Lewis Carroll's influence on their art and writings, and on the work of such famous people as writer/composer Shel Silverstein. We were also treated to an exhibit of Edward Gorey's copies of Carroll's books, part of his 26,000+ volume collection housed at the University's library. We took a short walk to see a recently restored Carroll-themed mural on the campus that had been hidden under layers of paint for decades.

We feature articles here about the possible Carrollian connections to modern voting, children's rights, ig-Pay atin-Lay, and dream research. And there's a comprehensive critique of a well-known book of criticism of Russian translations of the *Alice* books.

We present a new column here, "Alice in Advertising," by collector Dayna Nuhn. Alice and her crew have been favorites of advertisers for well over a century. Dayna reveals what is likely the earliest advertisement to feature Alice, from 1897.

Karen Mortillaro interviews Bridgette Mongeon about Bridgette's monumental sculpture of the mad tea-party, which she created for a park in Texas. Kar-

en, who is also a sculptor, asked her about the daunting task of creating massive sculptures using the ancient lost wax process.

We review a new book by LCSNA founding member Edward Guiliano: *Lewis Carroll: The Worlds of His Alices*. It reexamines Carroll's life and the *Alice* books in light of recent research. He examines Carroll's visual imagination through his photographs and book illustrations.

Stephanie Lovett reviews *The Fabulous Journeys of Alice and Pinocchio*, showing some surprising connections between the two famous characters. She notes that "both books broke new ground with their subversive representation of inquisitive children who were very far from being models of virtue." We continue our exploration of early recordings of songs about Alice and her adventures.

Lastly, we're pleased to present the first "Ravings from the Writing Desk" column from our new president, Linda Cassady. We look forward to many more!

CHRIS MORGAN

Not a Fan Parker Fan

DMITRY YERMOLOVICH

This is a critique of a 1994 book by Dr. Fan Parker, who reviewed eleven Russian versions of *Wonderland*. Though probably a belated response (Dr. Parker died in 2004), I believe it is still relevant because the book is sometimes referred to, rather unquestioningly, by authors who have apparently not consulted the actual source.

Here is an indicative example from the Russian version of Wikipedia (in translation):

Dr. F. Parker, the author of the book *Lewis Carroll in Russia*, maintained that Shcherbakov's translation was one of the best.¹

The Russian verb in this statement (утверждал—“he maintained”) is notably used in the masculine form, indicating that the authors of the text believe Fan Parker to be a man. Obviously, they have never held her book in their hands, since it contains an “About the Author” section in which the pronoun “she” is used explicitly to describe her.

SOME BACKGROUND FACTS

PRELIMINARIES

It is always helpful to form a general picture of a scholar's research. Fan Parker's life and work were summarized by her son Stephen in 2006:

Fan Parker (Fania) was born in Riga, Latvia, lived in Moscow, and came to the USA through Ellis Island as the traditional immigrant. She received her BA and MA at NYU, and her PhD in Slavic Studies at Columbia University in 1945. . . . She founded, developed, and chaired the Russian Department at Brooklyn College, which is part of the City University of New York. She was there for nearly 4 decades teaching an array of courses in Russian language, culture, and 19th and 20th century Russian literature. . . . She was the author or co-author of five books, . . . the last being *Lewis Carroll in Russian: Translations of Alice in Wonderland, 1879–1989*, published in 1994. . . .²

I have studied the full list of Dr. Parker's publications (not a very long one) and found that her name is not associated with any prior publications relating to either Lewis Carroll or translation studies.

First, a clarification. The work I will analyze here is referred to as a “book” and has the form of one, numbering 89 pages and being almost half an inch thick. Considering, however, that it is printed in large-type wide-spaced text on extra-thick paper, interspaced with numerous drawings by John Tenniel, and contains an appendix with excerpts from translations, it is more appropriate to classify it as a pamphlet or even as a long article. Dr. Parker's own text is just about 6,300 words long, which is equal to 21 standard pages.

Her stated purpose of study can be found in a short Introduction:

This first critical study of the Russian translations of *Alice* has been prompted by the need to clarify a subject that has long been in a state of confusion.³

She does not explain, however, what precise “subject” is believed to be “in a state of confusion.” We are told, instead, that Carroll's book was seen “by Russian translators as . . . a way for each to display his or her individual credentials and talents as a translator. . . . [They] did not exemplify any particular theories of translation.”⁴

This last assertion can easily be refuted at least in the case of one translator who described her conceptual approach to translating the *Alice* books in an article twice as long as Dr. Parker's pamphlet.⁵ Published as part of a literary yearbook in 100,000 copies, the article was read by a vast audience and had an impact on all subsequent Russian translations of Carroll's works, different as they were.

Dr. Parker does not mention whether there is a translation theory she herself adheres to or expects to see “exemplified.” The Introduction ends with the categorical remark that “. . . in the course of events, the translations reflected the vulgarization and impoverishment of the mighty Russian language.”⁶

I will come back to this contention.

A summary of some well-known facts about *Wonderland* (in addition to which, among other things, Dr. Parker expresses regret that “the nymphet quality of Alice Liddell” was lost in Tenniel’s drawings) is followed by eleven chapters, each a short review of one Russian version of Carroll’s book. The pamphlet has no concluding summary. Whatever findings the author comes to are given in individual reviews.

REVIEW OF THE FIRST VERSION

The first (anonymous) Russian version of *Wonderland* turned Alice into Sonja.⁷ As we now know, it was created by Yekaterina Boratynskaya, a niece of biologist Kliment Timiryazev.⁸

Dr. Parker has many nice words to say about it. She praises it, for instance, for the rendition of the famous phrase “Curiouser and curiouser,” “because it takes advantage of the full sentence.”⁹ Let us take the Sonja book from the shelf and look at what there is to applaud:

„Чуднѣ и распречуднѣ”, закричала Соня!
Отъ удивленія она даже пугалась въ словахъ,
и выражалась какъ-то не по-русски.¹⁰

Dr. Parker does not explain what she means by “taking advantage of the full sentence” or how that contributes to a good translation. Even more puzzling is her claim that this rendition is “the best to be found in any later translations.”¹¹

Well, no. It is a poor translation if only because it doesn’t reproduce what we find in the original: a surprised little girl’s natural slip of the tongue. Sonja’s remark sounds weird, but in a very different way: it’s a labored and stilted mannerism invented by a struggling translator.

Dr. Parker also commends the first translator for her “ingenuity in the tail/tale pun.”¹² Let us look at that, too:

„Ахъ, грустная и длинная повѣсть моей
жизни”, вздохнуламышь, глядя на Соню.
„Длинная-то, длинная”, подумала
Соня, оглядываясь на мышиный хвостъ,
„но почему грустная, любопытно
знать”, продолжила она про себя.¹³

For non-speakers of Russian, the above lines *do not contain any* attempt at reproducing the pun or at creating a humorous effect. Both *tale* and *tail* are given their direct dictionary equivalents, which differ in form and in grammatical gender and cannot combine with the same forms of adjectives (*long* and *sad*). So the assumption that Sonja might ever mistake one for the other is inherently false.

Dr. Parker goes on to say:

In a similarly humorous vein, we find the transformed image of the three little sisters—Sasha, Pasha, and Dasha—living in a dense forest under a key, or perhaps a waterfall, depending on the meaning one assigns to the Russian *kliuch*.¹⁴

One would need to have a peculiar sense of humor to smile at the idea of someone “living under a key,” an irrational vision of a huge key literally forming a shelter for the sisters. Carroll’s fantasy never degrades into incoherent absurdity. The Russian word for “key” may also mean “a spring” or “a river source,” but never “a waterfall” in this infelicitous word combination.

REVIEWS OF THREE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY TRANSLATIONS

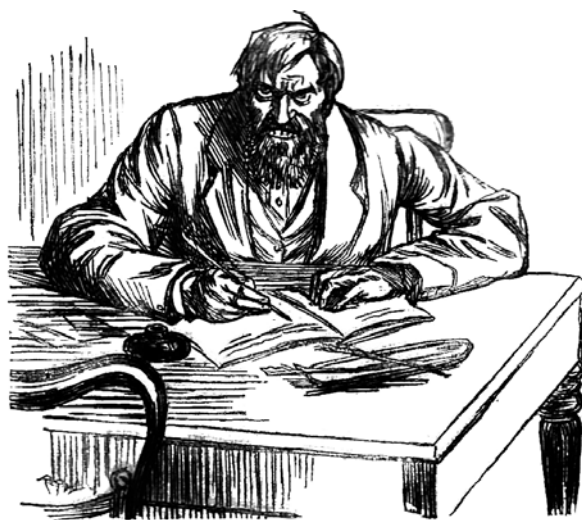
In 1908-09, three Russian versions of *Wonderland* were published by Matilda Granstrem, Aleksandra Rozhdestvenskaya, and Poliksena Solovyova.¹⁵ None of the three does credit to the original, but I cannot help pointing to Dr. Parker’s glaring misconceptions as she discusses them.

One incongruence is that she calls the first of the three authors “*Mr.* Granstrem”—which is ironic, considering that, as has been mentioned, Parker herself is referred to as a *male* professor in the Russian Wikipedia.

Further on, Dr. Parker finds the following fault with Rozhdestvenskaya’s translation:

“She softens Carroll’s sharp adjective and nouns (e.g., ‘screamed,’ ‘idiot,’ ‘off with her head’).”¹⁶

This is simply *not* true. The “sharp” words receive full-fledged equivalents in Rozhdestvenskaya’s translation: screamed—крикнула, взвизгнула; idiot—идиот; off with her head!—отрубить ей голову! In some instances, even more emotional words are used than



those found in the original. For example, “shouted the Queen” is translated as «гаркнула Королева» (“roared, or barked, the Queen”).

Fan Parker’s praises are as unfounded as her criticism. She asserts, for example, that Rozhdestvenskaya’s “versification . . . is good overall” and that the success of her translation “rests in her adept use of the Russian language.”¹⁷ The renderings of “Father William” and the lullaby are singled out in this context.

Well, let me quote two stanzas from Rozhdestvenskaya’s version of “Father William”:

Ты старик уж, отец,— снова сын завёл речь,—
И ты толст, слишком толст уж теперь,
Так зачем же, скажи, кувыркаешься ты,
И спиной отворяешь ты дверь? . . .
Ты уж стар, ты уж сед, слабые зубы твои.—
Сын сказал.— Тебе кашу есть!
Как же гúся всего— объясни это мне—
Мог с костями и клювом ты съесть?

[Back translation:

“You are an old man, father,” the son started speaking again,
“And you are fat, too fat now already,
So say why, indeed, you roll over your head
And with your back you open the door?” . . .
“You are old already, you are white-haired already, and weak are your teeth,”
The son said, “porridge <is> for you to eat!
How <is it that> a whole goose, explain it to me,
With the bones and the beak, you could eat up?”]

This versification is not only far from being “good,” it is below par, with wrong word stresses (как же гúся всего), multiple filler words (уж, слишком, же, это), repetitions (ты толст, слишком толст; ты уж стар, ты уж сед), unnatural sentence structures (тебе кашу есть); sequences that mismatch the rhythmic pattern (like «снова сын завёл речь», where the ever-accented vowel ě is forced into an unstressed syllable), and so on.

All that is exacerbated by extremely bad rhyming. More than once, a word is rhymed with a form of itself, an inadmissible blunder in Russian poetry, for example: есть (“eat”)—съесть (“eat up”), ero—hero (“him” or “it”). Most of Rozhdestvenskaya’s “rhymes” are either not rhymes at all (like все—нигде, мне—дворе, мне—судьбе, жару—могу, as just one common sound is not enough to make a Russian rhyme) or are what is called “weak” or “watery” rhymes based on verb endings (надевать—держатъ, отвечал—прогнал, etc.).

These facts call into question Dr. Parker’s expertise in Russian prosody.

On the other hand, the far more skillful Poliksenia Solovyova is subjected to hair-splitting criticism:

[In Solovyova’s translation,] Pat turns to “Pet,” the Cheshire Cat to “Chesterskii” Cat, and so forth. Misunderstanding the English construction, “I must have been changed several times,” she renders it as “it seems that I was changed [by others] several times.”¹⁸

This criticism is based on mistakes. To begin with, the rendition of *Pat* as Пэт is a perfectly legitimate re-spelling, in which the letter э stands for the English *a*, just as it does in the rendering of *Carroll* as Кэрролл and of thousands of other names.

Now, “Chesterskii” (Честерский) means “coming from Chester” and, considering that Chester is the county town of Cheshire, the choice of the adjective is hardly a mistake.

Finally, the phrase “I must **have been changed** several times” means exactly what Dr. Parker describes as a “misunderstanding”: a change effected by others, as opposed to “I must **have changed** [myself].” Incidentally, translator Aleksandr Shcherbakov understood it in the same way and translated it as «меня несколько раз превращали»¹⁹ (in back translation: “**they have** several times **turned me** into someone else”), but that goes altogether unnoticed by Dr. Parker, who, as we will see later, is very enthusiastic about Shcherbakov’s work. An inconsistent approach, to say the least.

REVIEWS OF D’AKTIL’S AND OLENICH-GNENENKO’S TRANSLATIONS

The version by D’Aktil (Anatoly Frenkel) was published in 1923. While admitting that he displays “overall a good command of Russian and English,” Dr. Parker reproaches him for replacing the content and characters of Carroll’s poems with inventions of his own. But a Russified version of an English story is liberal by definition, and one can hardly expect the translator’s *Marfushas* and *Yahskas* (Russian familiar pet names typically used when addressing servants) to represent English folklore or history.

The contradiction is all the more surprising because Dr. Parker takes diametrically opposed approaches to similar distortions in different translations. When Solovyova replaces Father William with *Borovik* (“cep, or boletus edulis”), the reviewer calls it “a splendid poem in tribute to the rare mushroom.”²⁰ But D’Aktil, she says, “takes great liberties” by replacing the same character with “a dragonfly hard at work gathering food for the winter.”²¹ Why a mushroom is a smaller liberty and a better substitute for Father William than a dragonfly remains unexplained.

D’Aktil is also criticized for his grammar, as he “. . . often replaces the relative pronoun ‘which’ (kotori) with participles. . . . It is not . . . fitting in regard to Carroll’s direct, economical use of English and leads to extended, wordy phrasing.”

Now this sounds exceedingly strange. A participle combines the meanings and functions of two words, a relative pronoun and a verb, so it inevitably makes the phrase *less*, not more, “wordy” than a relative clause. But even it weren’t true, *only one* participle phrase in the whole of D’Aktil’s translation, as my own search has shown, corresponds to a *which* clause, and here it is:

She found herself in a long, low hall, **which was lit up** by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.—Алиса очутилась в длинном низком зале, освещённом рядом свисающих с потолка ламп.

This 12-word 69-character sentence is even more concise and succinct than the 21-word 75-character English original. As for being “fitting” in regard to the original, this sentence is an exemplary translation: it is accurate and written in impeccable Russian.

But perhaps the reviewer just worded her idea poorly while meaning to say the opposite, that is, that D’Aktil often *substitutes* a pronoun-plus-verb phrase for a participle? That is not true either. While not giving up *which*-clauses altogether, the translator uses them very economically, and rightly so, because their frequent repetition is bad style in Russian.

Two other findings of the reviewer, that “the Mock Turtle soup is praised for being a ‘fashionable’ soup of fine ingredients”²² and that “the translation ends with Alisa relating her dream to her sister in italicized block letters,”²³ cannot be taken seriously as “faults.” But that is all she has to say before summarizing that “D’Aktil’s translation is not among the best.”²⁴ Not convincing, I am afraid.

That said, I am not trying to give any assessment of my own, favorable or unfavorable, of the D’Aktil version. The point I am making is that Dr. Parker’s critical arguments against it appear to be partial, untenable, and sometimes even untrue.

The translation by Aleksandr Olenich-Gnenenko (1940) is said to “follow the original as far as the Russian language permits, perhaps too tenaciously at times.”²⁵ The translator is praised for his good command of English, but his success with puns is characterized as limited (p. 30).

As for his poems, they are seen as “fairly successful approximations of the originals” (Ibid., p. 31). It is obvious that Dr. Parker was not familiar with Efim Etkind’s brilliant and crushing analysis of Olenich-Gnenenko’s versifications, which stated:

Olenich-Gnenenko failed the task he had set himself: he did copy the form of the “ballad” [“Father William”], but his translation lacks the naturalness of an unfettered and clever joke and is devoid of the original’s energetic, free intonation. The construction «То полезно ль...?» is ugly and false. And how

rhythmically expressionless is the stammering line «Ты, однако, весь день ходишь на голове», where the [rhythmic] stress singles out the preposition for no reason!²⁶

In discussing Olenich-Gnenenko’s verse, the internationally renowned philologist Etkind (who was the author of over 550 academic papers) uses such terms and phrases as “shapeless,” “unpleasantly imprecise,” “a lifeless copy,” “even a sophisticated adult reader won’t understand anything here,” and so on. His summary is as follows:

A translator of poetry has no right not to see the wood for the trees [or he] will stumble around and lose track. . . . This is what happened with poems from *Alice in Wonderland*: by translating them [in this way] after Samuil Marshak, Aleksandr Olenich-Gnenenko took a decided step backward.²⁷

In my opinion, no review of Russian poetic translations from Carroll can be valid if the reviewer is not familiar with Dr. Etkind’s analysis.

REVIEW OF DEMUROVA’S TRANSLATION

As Dr. Parker comes to her next object of review, the translation by Nina Demurova, she blasts it right away as “a classic demonstration of the vulgarization and impoverishment of the Russian language during the decades of Soviet rule,” a version “plebeian in tone and nuance, the choice of words and idioms taken solely from poor Soviet stock.”²⁸

It would be naïve to expect Dr. Parker to explain what exactly she means by “the vulgarization and impoverishment” of the language during Soviet rule. Of course, no serious expert would uphold such a sweeping statement about the Russian language, because twentieth-century Russian authors, including four Nobel Prize winners, revealed a language no less rich than that of any earlier period.

But here is why the academic calls Demurova’s translation “plebeian”:

This is embodied in her persistent use of “ty,” the second person singular form of “you,” a predominant form of address among Soviets, which creates a particularly harsh ambiance diminishing Alice’s stature as a person.²⁹

I feel really embarrassed at having to explain some elementary facts about Russian grammar and usage to demonstrate the falsehood of this assertion. But if we have to go over the basics, so be it.

Like all European languages except modern English, Russian has two distinct forms of the second person pronoun: singular (ты) and plural (вы).

The former is used to address a good friend, a family member, a child, or an animal (we do talk to pets and beasts, don't we?). The latter is reserved for conversations with individuals, especially older ones, beyond the circle of family and friends.

In pre-1917 Russia, the singular form was also the accepted way of addressing any member of the "lower" classes (a servant, a waiter, a coachman, or a peasant), regardless of their age. When the monarchy collapsed, this disparaging usage was finally abandoned. Whatever may be said about Soviet rule in Russia, it is undeniable that in official Soviet etiquette all citizens were to be addressed with the respectful plural pronoun *вы*.

And if the word "Soviets" as used by Dr. Parker stands for "Soviet people," it should be understood that there were different kinds of people who would use one or the other pronoun depending on whom they talked to and in what situation.

It is also wrong to allege that the pronoun *ты* "diminishes Alice's stature as a person." Let us recall that Alice is a seven-year-old girl. In Russia, small children have always been addressed with the familiar form, whether before, during or after the Soviet period. And what "stature" is Dr. Parker talking about? Alice's perceived status changes depending on the situation she finds herself in or the way she is treated by her interlocutors.

When the White Rabbit takes Alice for his housemaid in Chapter 4, it is altogether natural that, in Demurova's translation, he addresses her as *ты*, exactly as masters would treat their servants in the nineteenth century. One can find plenty of examples of this usage in the writings of Dr. Parker's favorite Russian author, Vsevolod Garshin (1855–1888; Parker's doctoral thesis was about his works).

But in Chapter 4, where Alice imagines herself being talked to by her nurse (that is, a servant), it is the polite plural forms that we find in Demurova's translation:

"Miss Alice! Come here directly,
and get ready for your walk!"—

«Мисс Алиса! Идите скорее сюда! Пора на прогулку, а вы ещё не одеты!»

This Russian wording is even politer than the original (*directly* is rendered as "quickly," and the command "*get ready*" is replaced by a mild complaint "you are not dressed yet"). Alice's "stature" as a member of the upper class, if that's what concerns anybody, is never compromised.

That said, there are situations in the book where the choice of the pronoun is open to discussion, as when the King questions Alice at the trial. (In my own

translation of the book, I have used the pronoun *вы* in that context.³⁰)

But, on the other hand, Alice's interlocutors are aware of her young age ("Consider, my dear, she is only a child," says the King in Chapter 8; "Tut-tut, child," says the Duchess in Chapter 9). It easily explains Demurova's choice of *ты*, the predominant way of addressing children in Russian, instead of *вы*. There is nothing "plebeian," "vulgar," or "Soviet" in that.

Dr. Parker's reference to Stuart Collingwood's words that "Mr. Dodgson possessed an intense natural appreciation of the beautiful,"³¹ cited in support of her criticism of Demurova, is completely off the point. Carroll's sense of the beautiful did not prevent many of his characters from speaking to Alice in a very uncivil way. The Gryphon rudely calls her a "simpleton," and the Mock Turtle, "very dull"; flowers tell her things like "I never saw anybody that looked stupider," and so on and so forth. The tone of such remarks agrees quite well with the Russian familiar form of address.

So much for the pronouns. What else does Dr. Parker find fault with? "Demurova," she says, "is impervious to the child's [i.e., Alice's] charms."³² As no further explanation is given, there exists no reasonable academic way to react to this assessment.

Some more specific criticism follows, however:

For "kick" [in "I think I can kick a little"], Demurova employs "liagat" which is a verb pertaining only to four-legged animals, such as a horse who throws his hind legs wildly.

Although Demurova's Alice used a different verb—*лягнуть* (*lyagnut*), not *liagat*, as Dr. Parker says—it indeed means "to kick," and, like the English word, can be said of an animal (such as a horse). But, also like "kick," it can easily describe the foot movement of a human being. Examples of that are common in Russian classic literature. (Dostoyevsky, for example, used the same word in the same sense as Demurova in his short story "The Double").

One more piece of Parker's criticism of Demurova:

When the Caterpillar says "What do you mean by that? . . . Explain yourself!" Demurova phrases the question with the verb "vydumat" which implies falsehood on the part of Alisa, a child of great honesty and integrity.³³

The falsehood that I can see here lies in the analyst's understanding of words and logic. In the translation, the Caterpillar's question («Что это ты выдумываешь?»—in back translation, "What are you fantasizing about?") implies not so much an accusation of "falsehood" as disbelief and skepticism.

And, speaking logically, Alice's honesty and integrity have nothing to do with what the Caterpillar may think of her. These are the Caterpillar's words, not Alice's. As Carroll puts it, Alice "had never been so much contradicted in all her life before."

Demurova is also under attack for using the word ругать instead of бранить (both mean "scold"). Yes, we know that nineteenth-century lexicographer Vladimir Dal wrote that the former "is more vulgar and rude" than the latter.³⁴ But that is a didactic exaggeration: ругать just *may* describe the use of strong language, but *not necessarily* at all. In any case, there is nothing rude about the word itself, especially in the reflexive combination ругать себя (*rugat' sebya*), which means simply "to scold, blame, or reprimand oneself." Ample evidence of that can be found in classic Russian literature, such as Gogol's or Dostoyevsky's works, and in the Russian versions of other English classics by distinguished translators, such as Immanuel and Samuil Marshak in their translation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The following lines by Dr. Parker sound simply preposterous to a Russian speaker:

Demurova gives "[ona] rugala sebia tak besposhchadno" (she swore at herself so unmercifully), crediting Alisa inappropriately with *a number of regularly employed swear words* [(!) *Emphasis added.—D. Ye.*].³⁵

Dr. Parker is openly "doctoring" the truth: that the translator credits Alice with "a number of swear words" is a glaring invention. The reviewer lays it on thick in a clear effort to justify her devastating verdict:

Demurova's unrelenting use of a vulgar style remains constant throughout, demonstrating unerringly that Soviet modes of expression are wholly inappropriate for Carroll's cultured English and England. Bit by bit, her translation of the Alice text exemplifies the general Soviet butchery of the mighty Russian language.³⁶

With this, I believe, we have come to a point when it can be said with enough confidence that many (if not most) of Dr. Parker's assessments do not, regrettably, demonstrate a good grasp of the Russian language. It may be attributable to her extended loss of contact with a genuine Russian-speaking environment. At the time she wrote her pamphlet, nearly eight decades had passed since her emigration to the United States. Another reason could be the superficial nature of Dr. Parker's research—if her writing deserves that name. Still more examples of that superficiality will be given below.

One can find a number of faults with Nina Demurova's translation, as did the renowned children's

writer and translator Kornei Chukovsky, despite the generally favorable tone of his review (Chukovsky 1968).³⁷ But any analysis must be fair, consistent, method-based, and unprejudiced. None of that appears to be the case with Dr. Parker's pamphlet.

TWO MORE TRANSLATIONS DISMISSED, TWO EXTOLLED

Dr. Parker criticizes two more "Soviet" versions of *Wonderland*. She describes the translation by popular children's writer Boris Zakhoder as "a strange amalgam of an English *Alisa*, improper Russian forms, and the translator's intrusions."³⁸ Etymologist Vladimir Orel's work is dismissed as "a thoroughly forgettable translation" full of "miscomprehensions and deviations from the original" as well as "contemporary Soviet jargon."³⁹

Even though there are reasons to give those translations a low rating indeed, Dr. Parker's arguments are scarce, inadequate, and sometimes entirely wrong. For example, she criticizes the use by Zakhoder of the interjection «Ой!» (which she translates as *Oy!*, but which more often corresponds to *Ouch!*, *Oh!*, or *Ooh!*), believing that "in Russian, as in English, [it] is more appropriate for an elderly person"⁴⁰—again, a gross misconception about Russian word usage. People of all ages use this interjection.

Orel is condemned for alleged "frequent use of abusive epithets from Russian common speech" (*Ibid.*, p. 48). Not one such "abusive epithet" is cited, however, and no explanation is given of how they differ from Carroll's own "abusive" epithets, such as "stupid," "idiot," and the like.

One "Soviet" translation, however, surprisingly earned Dr. Parker's appreciation as "the best of the Anglicized [i.e., non-Russified, *D. Ye.*] versions of *Alice*"—that by electrical engineer Aleksandr Shcherbakov, which was published in 1977 shortly after Zakhoder's version and the revised edition of Demurova's text. Because Mr. Shcherbakov's supporters grasped at this flattering characteristic in an effort to put his work on a pedestal, Dr. Parker's arguments deserve closer scrutiny.

The reviewer begins by praising Shcherbakov's text for being "free from Soviet jargon and solecism."⁴² As no examples or clarifications are given, this contention cannot be discussed seriously. Then she passes on to character names:

Shcherbakov keeps Carroll's nomenclature with only a few variants, such as Dodo into "Dodo-Kakikh-Uzhe-Bol'she-Net" (Dodo-of-the-sort-which-are-no-more), accenting the extinction of the large bird, and Caterpillar into "Cherepakha-Shelkopriad" (silk-spinning

caterpillar), of greater stature than a mere worm.⁴³

The reader may remember Dr. Parker's displeasure with Solovyova's "Chester Cat" (in place of Cheshire Cat) and alleged misspelling of the name Pat. Against that background, the academic is surprisingly indulgent toward a whole phrase of Shcherbakov's own invention attached to a very short original name. We are told that it accents the extinction of the bird, but why accent it at all? There is nothing to indicate that Lewis Carroll ever meant or would welcome such an accent—he simply made a character out of a familiar sight for the Liddell sisters: a picture of the bird by John Savory they saw at the Oxford University museum. And if the reader looks up the word *dodo* in any dictionary, the words "extinct bird" will pop up immediately, so the addition is totally unnecessary.

Dr. Parker has mixed together two characters, strangely calling Shcherbakov's Caterpillar *Cherepakha-Shelkopiad* ("Turtle-Silkworm"): in reality, it is just Шелкопряд (Silkworm). Here too, the reviewer is concerned with "stature," claiming that a silkworm is "of greater stature" than a mere worm.

Well, it is not. But even if it were, the original character is not a worm, but a *large blue caterpillar*. And, evidently having learned that silkworms are never large nor blue, Shcherbakov changes the epithets to *fat* and *grey*, thus significantly distorting the original image. But that goes unnoticed by Dr. Parker.

Next, Shcherbakov's handling of puns is discussed. Dr. Parker finds "special ingenuity" in his version of the tale/tail pun—a play on the word канцонетта ("canzonetta") and the phrase конца нету (*konca netu*, "no end").

In my opinion, this is a poor pun for several reasons: First, the pair are difficult to confuse because of different stress patterns; second, *canzonetta* is a rare musical term not even found in general Russian dictionaries, so a child reader is unlikely to understand it, let alone find the pun funny. But, most importantly, it is in no way related to the idea of a tail, so the tail-shaped poem makes no sense anymore.

As another example of Shcherbakov's "ingenuity," Dr. Parker cites his translation of the Lobster Quadrille song:

Shcherbakov's choice of fish, "sig" (a variety of salmon) and "lin" (a huge freshwater fish), is fitting and unusual.⁴⁴

Unusual? Yes. Сиг (*sig* "cisco") and линь (*lin* "tench") are not among the most common fish caught or served as food in Russia or England. The words are so rare that Dr. Parker has not even provided their exact English equivalents.

Fitting? Definitely not. Why replace well-known species of marine wildlife (whiting and porpoise) with something that few readers have seen or heard about? Dr. Parker does not explain that, so let me fill the gap: In an effort to make a pun out of линь ("tench"), the translator reinterprets the obsolete adjective предлинный ("very long") in a rather abstruse way as пред-линный "coming before a tench."

This pun sounds even more artificial, far-fetched, and labored in Russian than in the literal translation into English you have just read. It is miles apart from what it is intended to be an equivalent of—light and witty play on common words: *purpose* and *porpoise*, *whiting* and *blacking* (yes, it replaces both those puns).

Dr. Parker is certainly partial when she praises Shcherbakov for his "special ingenuity" in choosing the equivalent for the "*beat time/Time won't stand beating*" pun—провести время, where провести carries the double meaning "to spend" and "to cheat" (Parker 1994, p. 40). Boris Zakhoder used exactly the same solution, but nowhere in her review does Parker make any mention of that or any of his other puns (some of them not bad at all), let alone compliment his "ingenuity."

On the other hand, she never mentions the repeated occurrence in the speech of Shcherbakov's Alice of the same interjection for which she criticizes Zakhoder («Ой, простите, пожалуйста!», «Ой! Я опять её обидела»).

Let us look at another of Shcherbakov's solutions that Dr. Parker finds "deft": his translation of the chapter title "A Mad Tea-Party" as «Чаепитие со сдвигом», "which evokes the Russian custom of having tea with something (sugar, jam) or with someone, and by using the instrumental form of 'сдвиг' ('so *sdivigom*,' displacement) the connotation is drinking with those who are somehow displaced or 'off,' that is, the mad ones."⁴⁵

This passage again raises questions about Dr. Parker's grasp of the Russian language. She has detected a nonexistent analogy between Shcherbakov's чаепитие со сдвигом (literally, "drinking tea with a shift") and expressions like чай с сахаром (с вареньем), "tea with sugar or jam." What is overlooked here is the translator's attempt to play on the fact that the Hatter, the Hare, and the Dormouse move (i.e., shift) around the table.

As for the figurative meaning of the phrase со сдвигом, "crazy," it is a colloquialism that took shape precisely in the late Soviet period so much abhorred by Dr. Parker. The phrase is not common in educated speech (it returns just three hits in that sense in the National Russian Corpus⁴⁶), and is at odds with Lewis Carroll's style and lexical texture.

When pondering over Dr. Parker's partiality toward Shcherbakov's text, I came to the conclusion

that it stems from his ample use of the plural pronoun *вы*—something that Parker appears to consider as the hallmark of a good translation. That partiality is so strong that even when Shcherbakov’s Alice inconsistently switches over to the informal pronoun *ты*, Dr. Parker goes to great lengths to justify the departure:

At the end of the second chapter, as the Mouse swims away from Alisa, infuriated by her affectionate remarks about cats and dogs, Alisa pleads an informal form for the Mouse’s return. It is precisely how Alisa would address the Mouse had she been in a wakeful state. By his translation, Shcherbakov unobtrusively introduces a psychological twist in Alisa’s consciousness, as if for the moment she was leaving the world of dreams, the Mouse becoming what she is, a mere little mouse. Afterwards, both Alisa and the Mouse revert to the formal mode of address.⁴⁷

For the sake of clarity, let me quote the relevant lines directly:

. . . Алиса тихо и жалобно сказала:
— Мышка, милая! Вернись, пожалуйста.
Я больше не слова не скажу ни о кошках,
ни о собаках, раз ты их не любишь.⁴⁸

With Alice trying to appease a large angry animal (who, may I remind the reader, seems the size of a walrus or a hippopotamus to the diminished girl), her sudden rollback from the polite form *вы*, coupled with a diminutive (*мышка*, “little mouse”), is a highly questionable “twist” and looks more like an illogical mistake on the translator’s part.

But all right, let us believe for a moment that the wording reflects a psychological subtlety. We will then have to classify it as a needless departure from the original. Carroll’s Alice never questions the reality of what is happening to her; she does not leave her dream until she wakes up in the end of the book. Moreover, Wonderland was not only Alice’s dream, it was a dream Lewis Carroll himself cherished and wanted to remain in. As he wrote in the concluding poem of *TTLG*,

Ever drifting down the stream —
Lingering in the golden gleam —
Life, what is it but a dream?

So the presumed “twist of consciousness,” if it was actually meant by the translator, goes decidedly against Lewis Carroll’s concept and intent.

Incidentally, there are more cases of erratic use of formal/familiar modes of address by the translator. In Shcherbakov’s rendition of the Mouse’s tale, Fury is as inconsistent as *Alisa* when talking to the Mouse:

“I’ll be judge, I’ll be jury,” said cunning old Fury: “I’ll try the whole cause and condemn you to death.”⁴⁹
Наши законы—ваша вина.⁵⁰
Будешь немедленно ты казнена.

[*Back translation:* Our laws, **your** (*polite form*) guilt. **You will be** (*familiar form*) executed immediately.]

I must also comment on Dr. Parker’s remarks that “Shcherbakov is equally ingenious with his rendition of verse”⁵¹ and that he “maintains Carroll’s refinement” in language.⁵² My analysis shows that the opposite is true.

Most poems in the *Alice* books—whatever their original style or meter—have been rendered by Shcherbakov in the trochaic rhythm, which is associated in Russian culture with merry folk songs and dances. The translator seems indifferent to the style of the verse he renders. He even turns the Jabberwocky poem, which is styled as a grim medieval heroic epic and should be recited in a slow, solemn rhythm, into a *chastushka*—a genre of a jocular (often obscene) peasant song:

Розгрень. Юрзкие хомейки
Просвертели весь травас.
Айяют брыскулчейки
Под скорячий рычисжас.⁵³

The Mock Turtle’s song, which parodies a romantic lyrical song by James Sayles of the style performed in nineteenth-century musical salons, is also rendered by Shcherbakov in the same rollicking rhythm suggestive of a loud peasant woman singing, waving her scarf and tapping out a *chastushka*:

Суп горячий и густой,
Весь от жира золотой!
Мы всегда готовы уп-
Уплетать подобный суп!⁵⁴

[*Back translation:*

Soup, hot and thick,
All golden with fat!
We’re ever ready to guz-
Guzzle up such soup!]

But the vernacular is not the only register of speech in which Shcherbakov plunges his Alice (should I call it “plebeian,” to use Dr. Parker’s term?). He easily falls into bureaucratise as well. Consider the way he translates a clear and simple sentence:

And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the

tale was something like this . . . (*Wonderland*, Chapter 3)

Но Мышь изогнула дрожащий хвостик, сжала его лапками и исполнила нижеследующие стихи, которые в памяти Алисы были теперь неразрывно связаны с движениями мышиноного хвоста.⁵⁵

[*Back translation*: But the Mouse curved its trembling little tail, grasped it with its paws, and recited the poem following hereinafter, which in Alice's memory was now inextricably associated with the movements of the Mouse's tail.]

Apart from extensive arbitrary additions, the translator has not stopped short of using two bureaucratic clichés: нижеследующие, “following hereinafter,” and неразрывно связаны, “inextricably associated.” The crowning infelicity here is the word память (“memory”) for “idea,” as if the Mouse's tale was something Alice already knew but now began to link, for some strange reason, with the movements of its tail. In summary, the sentence is a poorly styled mistranslation.

Such is the degree of “refinement” and “fidelity to the English text” (quotations from Dr. Parker's review) that one finds in Shcherbakov's phenomenally inferior translation. Dr. Parker's assessment of it as “the best of the Anglicized versions of *Alice*” just doesn't hold water.

I believe that I have familiarized the reader sufficiently with Dr. Parker's “method” that there is no need to discuss her review of Vladimir Nabokov's *Anyia in Wonderland*. Her opinion of his work is enthusiastic, but does that opinion deserve to be taken into account any more than her other reviews? I believe not.

Like Boratynskaya, Granstrem, and Frenkel (D'Aktil), Vladimir Nabokov produced a strongly Russified version of *Wonderland* in a genre that contemporary philology cannot view as translation proper. But in the niche of Russianized adaptations, this early work of one of the world's most famous authors is a unique phenomenon that merits attentive and competent academic analysis in a separate study.

CONCLUSIONS

My study of the paper “Lewis Carroll in Russia” by Dr. Fan Parker has led me to the following conclusions.

- ◆ In her pamphlet, Dr. Parker tried to give credible ratings to 11 Russian versions of *Wonderland*, but failed to do so, due to the lack of method, objectivity, consistency, and sufficient competence in her analysis.

- ◆ Two different types of works—books “Russified” in accordance with now obsolete traditions of literary adaptation, and translations proper—should be studied and reviewed in accordance with different principles, and not mixed up together.
- ◆ Dr. Parker was obviously not guided by any theory of, or any authority in, literary translation.
- ◆ Dr. Parker used no set of uniform criteria in comparing each version of *Wonderland* either with the original or with other versions. Her paper is a conglomerate of widely selective, fragmentary, and arbitrary comments.
- ◆ Proper review criteria should have included, among others: translation correctness and accuracy; fidelity to the original concept, imagery, and style; global handling of humor, puns, and parodies; literary and poetic merits from the perspective of the target language.
- ◆ Dr. Parker's paper abounds in sweeping and unsuitably emotional judgements that are not substantiated by any examples or arguments. Most of the reviewer's opinions, whether favorable or unfavorable, are biased, and many of the points made are not true to fact.
- ◆ Many of Dr. Parker's statements reveal her profound misconceptions about Russian grammar, style, and word usage, probably due to her prolonged loss of contact with the living language.

The pamphlet cannot be deemed a serious or trustworthy study. Dr. Parker's criticism, whether eulogistic or disparaging, rests on bias, misconception, broken logic, and lack of expertise.

After resolving a long-standing misapprehension, it is with great relief that I conclude: Dr. Parker's work can be safely excluded from the circle of respectable academic sources in translation studies and discarded from responsible consideration.

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Endnotes

- ¹ https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Алиса_в_Стране_чудес—accessed on February 12, 2019.
- ² <https://slavic.drupal.ku.edu/sites/slavic.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/parker-openingremarks.pdf>
- ³ Parker, 1994, p. 3
- ⁴ Ibid, pp. 3 - 4
- ⁵ Demurova, 1970; 1978
- ⁶ Parker, 1994, p. 3
- ⁷ Sonja, 1879
- ⁸ Fet, 2016
- ⁹ Ibid., p. 10
- ¹⁰ Sonja, 1879, p. 15
- ¹¹ Parker, 1994, p. 10
- ¹² Ibid., p. 13
- ¹³ Sonja, 1879, pp. 33–34
- ¹⁴ Parker 1994, p. 12
- ¹⁵ Her name is spelled as Solov'eva by Parker (1994).
- ¹⁶ Parker, 1994, p. 20

- ¹⁷ Parker, 1994, pp. 20–21
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 23
- ¹⁹ Kèrroll, 1977, p. 68
- ²⁰ Parker, 1994, p. 25
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 27
- ²² Ibid., p. 27
- ²³ Ibid., p. 28
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 29
- ²⁶ Etkind, 1963, p. 348
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 351
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 32
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Kèrroll, 2018, p. 88
- ³¹ Parker, 1994, p. 33
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid., p. 35
- ³⁴ Dal', 1882, p. 108
- ³⁵ Parker, 1994, p. 35
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Notably, Dr. Parker was familiar with Kornei Chukovsky's review, but grossly misrepresented it as if it were exclusively critical (Parker, 1994, pp. 84).
- ³⁸ Parker, 1994, p. 38
- ³⁹ Ibid., pp. 47–48
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 37
- ⁴¹ Ibid., p. 46
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 39
- ⁴³ Ibid., p. 40
- ⁴⁴ Parker 1994, p. 45
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 42
- ⁴⁶ [http://ruscorpора.ru](http://ruscorpورا.ru)—accessed on February 12, 2019.
- ⁴⁷ Parker 1994, p. 42
- ⁴⁸ Kèrroll 1977, p. 46
- ⁴⁹ AA/W, Chapter 3
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 55
- ⁵¹ Parker 1994, p. 44
- ⁵² Ibid, p. 45
- ⁵³ Kèrroll 1977, p. 178
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 133
- ⁵⁵ Kèrroll 1977, p. 54

