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Review: *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms*

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techniques (disasters, duels, the loss of virtue, suicide) to introduce moral ambiguity, to strip away sentimentality, and to present characters who both discard their illusions and learn to face themselves without pretense (158–9). The following chapter guides readers through Stanislavsky's production of *The Seagull*, using the director's production plan and letters to the author. Of note to Chekhov scholars, in her conclusion, Carnicke introduces the full text of a little-known short play Chekhov wrote in 1883 entitled, *Na Lune (On the Moon)* to demonstrate that "Chekhov's characters are always good and bad, heroic and villainous, silly and serious and always seeking a better life. But only those who come to see life clearly as it is, who face and discard their illusions and lies, can find what they seek" (223).

Theatre educators and practitioners will find Carnicke's *Checking out Chekhov* to be useful for deepening their ability to work productively and richly on one of the most complex writers for the theatre. It has great potential to revitalize discussions of Chekhov in the classroom and the rehearsal room.

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Sophia Lubensky, *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms. Revised Edition.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 955 pages.

This is the second, revised and expanded edition of the *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms* by Sophia Lubensky. The first was published by Random House in 1995.

While the underlying lexicographic principles employed in the original edition have been preserved and the structure of the dictionary entries has remained unchanged, the second edition is different from the original edition in two important respects. First, about 550 new entries containing over 900 idioms along with their synonyms and variants have been added. This brings the total number of entries to approximately 7,500 and the total number of idioms close to 14,000. The new entries reflect the ongoing changes in the Russian language as well as the author's continuous work to remedy significant omissions. Second, a great number

of entries have been revised in light of the author's continued use of language corpora and informants. As with the first edition, the dictionary incorporates a number of unique features. Unlike traditional bilingual dictionaries, it provides definitions of the basic meanings of idioms in English, including usage notes and temporal, stylistic and sociocultural details; it gives grammatical descriptions of the collocations using a few clearly delineated patterns; and it offers, in most cases, more than one translation variant of each idiom. Most of the idioms have been taken from published translations of Russian prose fiction. It can be said that it is a five-in-one lexicographical resource, combining the features of a regular bilingual (Russian-English) dictionary, a monolingual dictionary (explicating the essential meanings of idioms), a translator's dictionary (supplying multiple, real-life solutions to translation problems), a Russian/English language learner's dictionary and a cultural resource providing access to a wide array of Russian literary works and illustrating the variability of cross-cultural representation of prose fiction. The dictionary is descriptive, i.e. it reflects the actual functioning of the Russian language as well as the actual translations of the idioms. Each entry represents a fascinating world of its own. As Lubensky puts it, "By creating a semantic habitat for each idiom, the dictionary [offers] assistance without curtailing the translator's ingenuity and creativity" (vii). Based on solid lexicographic principles, the dictionary differs markedly from the much larger online bilingual dictionaries, which tend to be unsystematic compilations of lexical items formed through accretion. In his article "O 'Longmane' bednom zamolvite slovo" (2009),¹ the leading Russian lexicographer Dmitry Yermolovich refers to such dictionaries as "verbal dumps" [bol'shaya svalka slovesnogo materiala].²

The sources for the Russian idioms include 285 works of Russian literature, the National Russian Corpus, all available Russian monolingual general dictionaries, monolingual phraseological dictionaries, surveys of countless Russian speakers, and major linguistic

¹ Мосты. № 2 (22) – М.: П.Валент, 2009. – С. 46-56: <http://yermolovich.ru/index/0-69>.

² See also Yermolovich's response to a reader's question "Doveriat' li 'Mul'titranu' i sokhraniat' li obshchiye slovari?" (September 17, 2011, 23:44) here: <http://yermolovich.ru/board/1-1-0-103>.

works on Russian phraseology. The bibliography section at the back of the dictionary is a useful lexicographic and literary reference source in its own right.

I have been using the dictionary on a regular basis since it first came out in 1995. Unlike traditional dictionaries, this particular dictionary can be more conveniently and efficiently used from back to front. The Index section at the back of the dictionary contains a list of all the key words used in the idioms that appear in the main body of the dictionary. They are presented in the forms used in the actual idioms. The Index indicates the quickest routes to the idioms in question. I start my searches from there.

Although the dictionary is generally oriented toward the American variety of English, speakers of other varieties of English will find it equally useful since most of the equivalents presented in the dictionary are common to all varieties of English. Speakers of Russian, especially translators, will find the dictionary especially useful as it provides explanations and variants of translation that cannot be found in other smaller Russian-English dictionaries of idioms currently available. In my view, Sophia Lubensky's dictionary is an unsurpassed achievement, representing the result of a prodigious amount of work spanning many years. Apart from everything else, it is the largest dictionary of its kind existing today. Having it is a must for any language and translation specialist.

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