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**Review: “The Other” in Translation: A Case for Comparative Translation Studies**

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**Alexander Burak. *"The Other" in Translation: A Case for Comparative Translation Studies*. Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2013.**

Alexander Burak's book *"The Other" in Translation* does two things: it draws attention to the field of Comparative Translation Discourse Analysis, with reference to numerous concrete examples, and it offers thought-provoking and informative discussion of a number of translation situations drawn from the interactions of Russian and Anglophone literature and culture. The book will be especially interesting to students and teachers of Russian at all levels, but it also has a great deal to offer readers from other languages and literatures, especially those with a background in translation studies.

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<sup>13</sup>I am very grateful to participants in my LIN 651 Syntax seminar at Stony Brook University in Fall 2014 for careful reading and engaged discussion of the entire monograph: Judy Bernstein, Paola Cépeda, Boris Jacobson, Lei Liu, Ala'a Melebari, Hwichan Oh, Robert Pasternak, Jaime Suzuki, Russell Tanenbaum, and Chong Zhang. All mistakes remain my own responsibility.

Comparative Translation Discourse Analysis aims, in this case, to elicit specific details of how ‘otherness’ is handled in translation from Russian to English and English to Russian. Burak’s book includes six case studies, involving Russian translations of Ernest Hemingway; “sexed-up” Russian voiceover film translation; translation of *skaz* (an oral form of narrative, in this case peasant speech in Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*) as a “whole-text realium;” translating postmodernism (in Vladimir Sorokin’s *Day of the Oprichnik*); and the political implications of variously tendentious translations of the name of the punk-protest group Pussy Riot into Russian. Thus the book devotes attention both to literary translation and to film voiceovers (providing a detailed background on Russian film voiceovers, which differ from both dubbing and subtitling) as well as the phenomenon of a Russian group who chose a name in a foreign language (English). The final chapter deals usefully with new developments in the academic organization of translation studies and the profession of translation in Russia today; readers will want to pursue the references to online materials.

Burak is unusual in that he can translate confidently both from Russian to English and from English to Russian. He frequently offers his own solutions when one that he cites presents problems, and so in this way has “skin in the game.” His versions show great sensitivity to stylistic level, especially the conversational and colloquial, and inspire confidence that he knows what he is talking about. His often witty style is echoed in the cartoon on the book’s cover (though it is too bad that it refers to French rather than Russian): despite its wealth of specific detail, “*The Other*” in *Translation* is not at all a tedious read.

Several of these chapters were previously published as separate articles in various professional journals. While this means they are well-written and shapely in themselves, it sometimes makes for repetition within the book as a whole: the reader is introduced more than once to Puchkov-Goblin, and some of the conceptual definitions recur. However, the book enjoys very high production value (a credit to Slavica Publishers) – aside from occasional odd wording, this rather compulsive reader found almost no typographical errors in either Russian or English. Some of the appendices supply additional data to support analysis in the chapters (listing various translations of *Catcher in the Rye*, etc.), while others feel

like a selection of interesting items that Burak could not resist including, pointing outward into further topics of study.

One of very few quibbles I could mention is with Burak's critique of the title *Nad propast'ju vo rzhi* for Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. He rightly points out that it is not entirely adequate (adding the sense of "above" and "abyss" to the original, and removing the catcher), but, since it is taken from Samuil Marshak's translation of the Robert Burns poem, poetic translation required that the line scan in a way that is bound to impact meaning. By using the line from a well-known translation of Burns, the Russian edition ties the two texts together even more tightly than in the English original. (And no doubt it is true that "propast'" could be read as a negative reference to Western anomie.)

In sum, Alexander Burak's *"The Other" in Translation* is an informative, provocative, thought-provoking, interesting book that should help to start and continue many conversations among both translators to and from Russian and the scholars and students who use their products in working with Russian literature, film and culture. Now that Translation Studies is growing as a discipline, impacting the teaching of literature in translation as well as other fields, academic libraries will want to acquire this title as well.

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***Baba Yaga: The Wild Witch of the East in Russian Fairy Tales.* Translation and introduction by Sibelan Forrester; captions to images by Helena Goscilo; selection of images by Martin Skoro and Helena Goscilo; edited by Sibelan Forrester, Helena Goscilo, and Martin Skoro; Foreword by Jack Zipes. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014. Notes. Index. vii + 202 pp. \$42.49 (hardcover); \$25.99 (e-reader).**

Villains are in, as we see in our Disneyfied multiplexes and musical theater productions, and what better villain to highlight than one who is functionally ambiguous? Given that Baba Yaga has been featured in a Hellboy comic (Mignola, *Hellboy, Vol. 3: The Chained Coffin and Others*, Dark Horse,