Translating the translingual text

Olga Grushin's anglophone novel *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* in Russian

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This article examines strategies applied in selected passages of Elena Petrova's Russian translation of Olga Grushin's anglophone novel *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* (2005). The novel is set in Moscow during the late Soviet period and depicts a crisis precipitated by the changes brought by glasnost in the life of a loyal apparatchik. Although the Russian-American writer Grushin composed the novel in her adopted language of English, it reflects a Russian cultural subtext and contains numerous Russian linguistic elements and cultural allusions. It is therefore interesting to analyze how these elements are rendered in the Russian translation, entitled *Zhizn' Sukhanova v snovideniiakh* (2011). The analysis is followed by a consideration of challenges posed by translingual texts to theoretical understandings of translation. It argues that established concepts within translation studies, such as domestication, foreignization, source language and target language, are not well-suited to cases of literary translingualism.

Keywords: Grushin, Grushina, Petrova, The Dream Life of Sukhanov, Zhizn' Sukhanova v snovideniiakh, translingual, translation, Russian

Introduction

A new generation of Russian émigré writers has come of age since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. Remarkably, many have made their literary debuts not only outside the territory of Russia but in languages other than Russian. Literary translingualism, defined by Steven G. Kellman as "the phenomenon of authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one" (2000: ix), is, of course, as old as literature itself.[1] However, as Adrian

1. Kellman distinguishes further between "ambilinguals," who have written significant works in more than one language, and "monolingual translinguals," who write in one, non-native

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Wanner argues in *Out of Russia: Fictions of a New Translingual Diaspora*, the biographies of writers such as David Bezmozgis, Lena Gorelik, Andreï Makine, Gary Shteyngart, and Lara Vapnyar, as well as their themes of cultural identity and hybridity, set them apart in significant ways from previous waves of Russian emigrants.[2] Whereas twentieth-century Russian translingual writers such as Vladimir Nabokov, Irène Némirovsky, and Joseph Brodsky switched languages after having lost hope of ever returning to their homeland, their successors have the possibility of traveling back and forth between their native and adopted countries. This is also true of their literary works, as evidenced by recent Russian translations of anglophone novels by Olga Grushin, Michael Idov, and Gary Shteyngart.[3]

Many contemporary works of translingual literature underscore, through their form as well as content, how different languages can interact productively. Rita Wilson argues that "translingual narratives transform literary and cultural discourse, not only by relocating it on cultural margins, and by foregrounding intercultural dialogue and translation, but also by drawing discrete literary traditions into contact" (2011: 237). The translingual and transcultural character of recent fiction by Russian émigré writers raises interesting questions about how readers might make sense of such texts, depending on whether they are able to decode Russian words and recognize references to the Russian cultural context. When a translingual text is then translated from the author's adopted literary language into Russian, further questions arise with implications for understandings of both translingualism and translation.

In this article, I will consider one example of a translingual text in translation: Elena Petrova's Russian rendering, entitled *Zhizn' Sukhanova v snovideniiakh* (2011), of Olga Grushin's critically acclaimed anglophone novel *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* (2005).[4] Although this novel was composed entirely in English — an

language (2000: 12). Other scholars have used the terms heterolingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism to describe the use of more than one language within the same text.

2. For a brief overview of the different waves of Russian émigré writers, see Wanner (2011: 4–5). For more on the first wave, see Beaujour (1989).

3. Gary Shteyngart's *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, *Absurdistan*, and *Super Sad True Love Story* have all been published in Russian translation. Michael Idov's *Ground Up* has been published in his own Russian translation (entitled *Kofemolka*), and Olga Grushin's novels *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* and *The Line* have been published in Elena Petrova's translations.

4. *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* won the 2007 Young Lions Fiction Award and was nominated for the 2007 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, the 2006 Orange Award for New Writers, and the 2006 Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. It was listed as one of the best works of fiction of the year by several publications, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

acquired language for Grushin, whose native tongue is Russian — it could easily be mistaken for a translation from Russian. [5] A number of details, such as the Russian name of the eponymous protagonist Sukhanov, as well as that of the author; the late-Soviet-era setting; and the presence of Russian words in the English text, all potentially contribute to a false impression that the novel must have been written in Russian and subsequently translated into English.[6]

Grushin collaborated to a certain extent with Petrova on the translation, reviewing and revising it,[7] and she praises Petrova's rendering in her preface (2011: 5).[8] In what follows, I will consider the translation strategies applied in selected passages that contain translingual aspects in the original text. This analysis is admittedly limited in scope, and its conclusions undoubtedly raise more questions than they answer. The aim here is not to evaluate Petrova's translation or to assess its degree of fidelity to the original, but rather to identify particular challenges posed to the translator of translingual texts, and to offer some reflections on the implications of literary translingualism for translation theory.

5. Born in Moscow in 1971, Grushin spent part of her childhood in Prague, where her father, the prominent sociologist Boris Grushin, wrote for an international journal during the years 1977–1981. Beginning at the age of thirteen, Grushin attended Moscow School Number 45, which had a focus on the English language and exposed Grushin to works of Western literature not typically taught in Soviet schools. Upon graduation, she followed in the footsteps of several of her relatives by enrolling, in 1988, in Moscow State University's Department of Journalism. After one year of study there, she accepted a scholarship from Emory University, becoming the first Soviet citizen to receive a bachelor's degree in the United States (Galkina 2006). Grushin continues to reside in the United States, of which she became a naturalized citizen in 2002, while retaining her Russian citizenship. In a public talk given at the Library of Congress National Book Festival in 2010, Grushin recounts that she had always planned to become a writer, and that, around the age of 23, she made a conscious decision to switch to English as her literary language in the hope of being published in the United States (Library of Congress 2010). After the publication of several short stories in various journals, Grushin debuted as a novelist in 2005 with *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*. For a detailed overview of Grushin's biography and works to date, see Hansen 2011.

6. For an analysis of the effects of translingual elements in Olga Grushin's *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* on the reading process, see Hansen 2012a.

7. Author's email correspondence with Olga Grushin, 4 April 2012.

8. "Perevod s angliĭskogo byl sdelan zamechatel'noĭ perevodchitseĭ Elenoĭ Petrovoĭ, za ch'e tonkoe chuvstvo iazyka ia eĭ bezkonechno priznatel'na" (Grushina 2011: 5). [The translation from English was done by the wonderful translator Elena Petrova, for whose fine-tuned sense of language I am forever grateful.] Petrova is professor in linguistics at St. Petersburg University and an experienced translator of English-language literature by such authors as Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, and Ray Bradbury.

The Russian subtext in the anglophone text

Set in Moscow in August 1985, the novel depicts an existential crisis experienced by the 56-year-old protagonist Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov when changes brought by the reform policy of glasnost first begin to make themselves felt in Soviet society. At the novel's opening, Sukhanov leads a privileged life within the Soviet elite as editor-in-chief of a prominent art journal. He toes the party line, censuring other authors' articles and writing his own on topics such as "Surrealism and Other Western 'Isms' as Manifestations of Capitalist Insolvency" (Grushin 2005, 36). He is richly rewarded with perks, such as a chauffeured Volga, a spacious apartment, and occasional trips abroad. However, as narrative flashbacks to Sukhanov's childhood under Stalin and youth during Khrushchev's Thaw gradually reveal, he had previously led a very different life as a non-conformist artist and admirer of surrealism. Memories of this repressed past increasingly beset the protagonist, causing him to question his choices in life. At the same time, he has difficulty adapting to the new expectations of journalistic openness that come with glasnost. At the end of the novel, unemployed and estranged from his family, he resolves to take up painting again.[9]

Although Grushin's novel was written and first published in the United States for an anglophone readership, it draws heavily on a Russian cultural subtext, or "repertoire of the text," to employ the term coined by Wolfgang Iser (1978: 34). While the novel can be read as a story of a midlife crisis, this crisis is precipitated by circumstances specific to the late-Soviet-era context. My characterization of Grushin's text as an English-language novel with a Russian cultural repertoire is supported by the author's own statement that she wanted to write a "Russian novel in English words" (Moskalev 2006).

Texts written in an acquired language, as Kellman observes, sometimes bear traces of the author's mother tongue, revealing "instances in which the author is thinking in one language but employing the locutions of another" (2000: 10). The Russian linguistic and cultural subtext often shines through the English text of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*. This was an intended effect, according to Grushin, who has explained that she "tried to preserve Russian cadences, paraphrases of Russian poems and turns of speech, Russian ways of thinking, specifically Russian uses of certain concepts and words (e.g., the recurrence of 'soul,' which populates Russian expressions quite liberally)."[10] In a sense, a process of translation, conveying a Russian cultural subtext through the medium of the English language, was in

9. For an analysis of the novel's depiction of memory in relation to glasnost, see Hansen (2012b).

10. Author's email correspondence with Olga Grushin, 12 November 2009.

operation already in the writing of the original novel. As a result, Russian words, expressions, and cultural allusions appear in the text alongside idiomatic English expressions, such as "What the hell" and "Mr. Big Shot" (Grushin 2005: 81, 16).

The reader of the original novel is frequently reminded of its Russian subtext through numerous typographical markers of foreignness, as Russian words and expressions, such as "*spokoinoi nochi*" ('good night') and "*vareniki*" ('dumplings'), are often (though not always) set off by italics and/or quotation marks (Grushin 2005: 83, 54). Sometimes, although again not consistently, Russian words and phrases are translated or explained through context. This practice appears to follow what Brian Lennon identifies as "three main conventions for managing languages other than English in U.S. trade-published books" (2010: 10).

> First, [foreign languages] are *contained* — confined to single words, phrases, or brief exchanges of spoken dialogue, as touches of cultural verisimilitude (or its simulation) that 'season' the text ever so lightly with the foreign without dulling its domestic flavor. Second, they are tagged (by convention, with italic type) to mark them as voiced (as breaks in a continuum of subvocalized prose) and to mark them as 'foreign' language. Third, they are translated — usually in direct apposition, as in 'The Mexican said *Hola*, or hello.' Languages other than English are administered, so to speak, in an ethnographic or pedagogic mode presuming the lowest common denominator, anglophone monolingualism. (2010: 10)

Venuti criticizes similar conventions in English-language translations, arguing that Anglo-American publishers have an economic interest in:

> producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other. (1995: 15)

Lennon's characterization of what he holds to be a current trend within commercial anglophone publishing implies that conformity to these conventions has an undesirable reductive effect, diluting foreign elements in literary works to an easily digestible strength by smoothing out or eliminating possible obstacles to interpretation.[11] Grushin's novel was first published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, which,

11. Antoine Berman also argues that translations sometimes exhibit the same tendency: "The traditional method of preserving vernaculars is to *exoticize* them. Exoticization can take two forms. First, a typographical procedure (italics) is used to isolate what does not exist in the original. Then, more insidiously, it is 'added' to be 'more authentic,' emphasizing the vernacular according to a certain stereotype of it" (2004: 268). For discussions of how reviews of translations of literature into English express a preference for fluency and transparency, see Venuti (1995) and Grossman (2010).

as a subsidiary of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., falls into the category of publishers described by Lennon. Yet, rather than reducing foreignness to kitsch, Russian elements in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* carry a defamiliarizing potential that gives rise to interpretative possibilities (Hansen 2012a).

In the following passage, a transliterated Russian expression is conveyed using two of the three conventions described by Lennon, i.e., italics and quotation marks. The third convention mentioned by Lennon — translation — is rendered unnecessary by a contextual description:

> Suddenly there was a rustle, a stir, glasses being raised first here, then there, as a chorus of "*Vashe zdorovie!*" spread across the hall, rolling through the crowd like exalted ripples originating somewhere at the heart of things and reaching wider and wider. (Grushin 2005: 5)

Italics draw the reader's eye to the transliterated Russian drinking toast, further highlighted by the description of its aural amplification in the exhibition hall, where it "spread," "as a chorus," "rolling through the crowd" and "reaching wider and wider."

By incorporating Russian words and expressions into the primarily anglophone text, Grushin continually confronts the reader with the foreignness of the fictional world she depicts. In the Russian translation, however, this effect is naturally diminished due to the use of the Cyrillic alphabet throughout. The same Russian words and phrases, set off variously by transliteration, quotation marks, and/or italics in the original text, visually blend in with the surrounding words in the Russian translation, as can be seen in Petrova's rendering of the above-quoted passage:

> Vdrug po zalu proletel shorokh, gde-to zarodilos' volnenie, to tut, to tam v vozdukhe stali vstrechat'sia bokali, i nakonets po tolpe prokatilos' druzhnoe "vashe zdorovie!", raskhodias' vostorzhennymi krugami otkuda-to ėpitsentra sobytiĭ. (Grushina 2011: 14)

Grushin has stated that, when writing the novel, she "embedded 'explanations' of various Russian expressions and traditions that I would never include if writing in Russian."[12] An example of this is found in the following passage, in which Sukhanov runs into his estranged friend Lev Belkin for the first time in many years:

> Original:
> "I haven't changed, and yet you didn't recognize me," Belkin said.

12. Author's email correspondence with Olga Grushin, 12 November 2009.

> "Well, you know what they say — if someone who knows you well doesn't recognize you, you'll end up rich," Sukhanov joked humorlessly. (Grushin 2005: 19)
>
> Translation:
> – Niskol'ko ne izmenilsia — to-to ty menia ne uznal, — skazal Belkin.
> – Znachit, bogatym budesh', — bezradostno otshutilsia Sukhanov. (Grushina 2011: 29)
>
> Back translation:
> "I haven't changed at all, and yet you didn't recognize me," Belkin said.
> "That means you'll be rich," Sukhanov joked humorlessly.

Not surprisingly, the signaling and explanation of the idiom in the original text have been omitted from the translation, as they are superfluous for readers familiar with the Russian idiom "Ne uznal, bogatym budesh'." Another example of an embedded explanation that is unnecessary for Russian readers is found in the following passage, which describes socialist realist paintings at a retrospective art exhibit:

> Original:
> Other, milder creations hung under the spotlights, presenting to the audience so-called Socialism with a Human Face — a slogan that was perhaps more familiar to Sukhanov than to anyone else here. (Grushin 2005: 6)
>
> Translation:
> Drugie, bolee umerennye raboty, umelo podsvechennie, nagliadno demonstrirovali "sotsializm s chelovecheskim litsom." (Grushina 2011: 15)
>
> Back translation:
> Other, more moderate works, skillfully illuminated, clearly displayed "socialism with a human face."

Also superfluous for Russian readers is the following explanation of wordplay in Vladimir Tatlin's invention "Letatlin," provided by the original text: "the glider's name, *Letatlin*, had amused him with its ingenious merger of inventor and invention, of Tatlin and *letat'*, 'to fly'" (Grushin 2005: 51). In the Russian version, it is merely stated that Sukhanov retained knowledge about the invention due to its clever name: "blagodaria ostroumnomu nazvaniiu apparata, 'Letatlin'" (Grushina 2011: 67; back translation: thanks to the machine's clever name, "Letatlin").

Similarly, some proper nouns given in full in the original text are abbreviated in the translation, e.g., "Moscow State University" (Grushin 2005: 13) is rendered into Russian simply as "MGU" (Grushina 2011: 23); the "Foreign Affairs Institute" (Grushin 2005: 11) is referred to as "MGIMO" (Grushina 2011: 20); and, in an encyclopedia entry about Sukhanov, "the Surikov Art Institute" is translated as

"MGAKhI im. V. I. Surikova" and "the Communist Party" as "KPSS" (Grushin 2005: 36; Grushina 2011: 48).[13]

However, a converse strategy of expansion is applied in a passage listing the prizes won by the celebrated socialist realist painter and Sukhanov's father-in-law, Pyotr Alekseevich Malinin. The original reads: "two-time laureate of the Lenin Prize, member of the Academy of Arts of the USSR since 1947" (Grushin 2005: 9), while the translation reads: "laureata Leninskoĭ i Gosudarstvennoĭ premiĭ, chlena Akademii khudozhestv SSSR s tychiacha deviat'sot sorok sed'mogo goda, s samogo dnia eë osnovaniia" (Grushina 2011: 18–19; back translation: laureate of the Lenin and State prizes, member of the Academy of Arts of the USSR since 1947, the very day of its creation). Here, the translation elaborates on this passage, emphasizing Malinin's early membership in the Academy of Arts and adding to the list of his achievements the "Gosudarstvennaia premiia" (State Prize). After de-Stalinization, this prize replaced the Stalin Prize (Stalinskaia premiia), and the title "Gosudarstvennaia premiia" was also applied retroactively to previous recipients of the Stalin Prize.[14] Appearing together with the year 1947, its euphemistic use in Petrova's translation serves to strengthen the implication that Malinin, although officially feted as an artist, is nothing more than an opportunist hack. The words "State Prize," had they appeared in the original novel, would not have carried the same connotation for most anglophone readers.

The above example appears to be an exception to the overall tendency in Petrova's translation, however. The omission of cultural explanations, embedded in the original text for the benefit of monolingual anglophone readers but unnecessary for russophone readers' understanding of the text, results in an economy of language. This phenomenon goes against the general trend, identified by Antoine Berman, of expansion of translations resulting from the translator's efforts to clarify or explain foreign elements for the target reader. "Every translation," Berman notes, "tends to be longer than the original," which, he argues, has the effect of impoverishing the text (2012: 246). In the case of Petrova's translation of Grushin's novel, however, the reverse is true.[15] For russophone readers, the Russian cultural subtext requires less explanation than is given in the anglophone original.

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13. In Russian, "MGIMO" stands for "Moskovskiĭ gosudarstvennyĭ institut mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniĭ" (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) and "MGAKhI im. V. I. Surikova" stands for Moskovskiĭ gosudarstvennyĭ akademicheskiĭ khudozhestvenniĭ institut imeni V. I. Surikova" (Surikov Moscow State Academic Art Institute).

14. The Gosudarstvennaia premia (State Prize) was awarded annually in the Soviet Union from 1967 to 1991.

15. It should be noted that Russian translations of English texts are typically shorter than the original. This is due, among other things, to the absence of grammatical articles in Russian. This

Translingual puns in translation

The Dream Life of Sukhanov contains a number of puns, both monolingual (exclusively in English) and translingual (based on both English and Russian words). These serve to reinforce some of the themes and leitmotifs in the novel (Hansen 2012a). Wordplay, dependent as it is on multiple meanings of words, "poses a special problem to translators" (Davis 1997: 27).[16] Kathleen Davis maintains:

> As a signature of one language that requires the affirmative but contestatory countersignature of another language, wordplay in translation ensures that languages encounter one another, and that through their very difference they challenge and confirm — but never resolve — each other's identity. (1997: 40)[17]

For this reason it is particularly interesting to examine if and how puns — translingual as well as monolingual — in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* have been rendered into Russian.

The reader's attention is drawn to the act of punning by a passage early in the novel, in which Sukhanov reflects on his own accomplishments and social status as "a man who is himself something of a weight in the art world, pun most certainly intended" (Grushin 2005: 10). Although the end of this sentence signals the presence of a pun, it is not yet apparent what, exactly, the pun turns on. It is partially realized in the subsequent paragraph, which reads: "For the past twelve years, Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov had occupied the most influential, most enviable post of editor-in-chief at the country's leading art magazine, *Art of the World*" (Grushin 2005: 10). The magazine's title creates a pun on "the art world" from the previous paragraph. A further pun, on the word "weight," becomes apparent several pages later, when Belkin notes that Sukhanov has "gained weight, become all solid" (Grushin 2005: 18). The phrase "a man who is himself something of a weight in the art world" thus contains two puns, the realizations of which are deferred in the narrative.

Petrova's translation of the first passage reads: "imeet kakoĭ-nikakoĭ ves v mire iskusstv" (Grushina 2011: 20; back translation: he had a certain weight in the world of the arts). The clause that provides an explicit indication of a pun in the original is omitted in translation, and the second pun, on "weight," is not retained; the later

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holds true for Petrova's translation, which consists of 80,130 words, whereas the original novel contains 113,856 words (author's email correspondence with Olga Grushin, 11 June 2013). The word count is exclusive of paratexts such as the preface and acknowledgments.

16. For in-depth discussions of types and characteristics of puns, see Ahl (1988), Attridge (1988), Brown (1956), and Culler (1988).

17. On puns in translation, see also Elena Rassokhina's article in this issue.

passage in translation reads: "Raspolnel, solidnyĭ takoĭ …" (Grushina 2011: 28). Although the Russian verb *raspolnet'* means 'to put on weight,' it has a different root from that of the noun *ves* (weight), and thus does not create a pun.

The pun on "the art world" is, however, conveyed in translation: "Uzhe dvenadtsat' let Anatoliĭ Pavlovich Sukhanov zanimal chrezvychaĭno otvetstvennyĭ, chrezvychaĭno zavidnyĭ post glavnogo redaktora vedushchego iskusstvovedcheskogo zhurnala 'Iskusstvo mira'" (Grushina 2011: 20; back translation: For the past twelve years Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov had occupied the extremely important, extremely enviable post of editor-in-chief of the leading art journal "Art of the World"). The pun created by "v mire iskusstv" (in the world of the arts) and "Iskusstvo mira" (Art of the World) is more compact in Russian than in the English original. Furthermore, the title of Sukhanov's magazine contains a pun on the title of the early twentieth-century art nouveau journal *Mir iskusstva*. The contrast between the art-for-art's-sake ethos of *Mir iskusstva* and the socialist realist ideology of Sukhanov's journal offers an ironic commentary on the latter (Hansen 2012b: 545–546). While this particular pun is latent in both the original text and the translation, it is arguably more likely to be perceived as a pun by russophone readers, due to their greater familiarity with the cultural-historical context.

Considering the general difficulty of translating wordplay, it is not surprising that some puns are omitted in Petrova's translation. However, several puns are conveyed through the strategy of substitution.[18] The following passage from the original text contains a translingual pun on the Russian word *babochka*, which denotes both 'bow tie' and 'butterfly':

> a well-known actor emerged, in the process of unfolding an enormous pink umbrella over his nineteen-year-old wife. The couple chirped "Good night" to Anatoly Pavlovich, stared at Belkin with unbridled curiosity, and ran to a Volga that had just pulled up. The girl was giggling, and Sukhanov distinctly heard her say *babochka* — "bow tie" or "butterfly" — but the night swallowed the rest of the sentence and he tried to convince himself she was discussing lepidoptery rather than Belkin's unfortunate neck decoration. (Grushin 2005: 19–20)

In the original novel, this pun is made in Russian, thus requiring an embedded explanation for the anglophone reader. Perhaps surprisingly, the one Russian word that appears in the original passage — *babochka* — is not retained in Petrova's translation of this passage, although the compound word *galstuk-babochka* (back

18. For a discussion of various techniques for translating idiomatic wordplay, such as equivalent transformation, loan translation, extension, analogue transformation, substitution, compensation, omission, and metalingual comment, see Veisbergs (1997).

translation: necktie-bow tie) is used in an earlier description of Belkin's clothing.[19] Sukhanov's uncertainty about what he has heard (Was the speaker talking about Belkin's embarrassingly shabby bow tie, or lepidoptery?) is transformed here into a question of whether the speaker was commenting on Belkin's bow tie or merely discussing women's fashion:

> Sukhanov iavstvenno rasslyshal: "… i sboku bantik", no ostal'nye eë slova proglotila noch', i on postaralsia sebe vnushit', chto predmetom obsuzhdeniia byla nekaia modnaia damskaia ideia, a ne duratskaia udavka na shee u Belkina. (Grushina 2011: 30)
>
> Back translation:
> Sukhanov distinctly heard: "… And the bow's to one side," but the night swallowed the rest of her words, and he tried to convince himself that the subject of the discussion was some kind of fashionable female notion, and not the idiotic noose around Belkin's neck.

The word "babochka" has been replaced here by a fragment of the Russian idiom "Chert-te chto i sboku bantik." This idiom is typically used to express disapproval of something perceived as strange or absurd, often with reference to clothing. The Russian word "bantik," although meaning "bow" in English, would not typically be used to denote a man's necktie, but the overheard phrase "… i sboku bantik" could be interpreted by Sukhanov as an idiomatic reference to Belkin's appearance in general. A pun is thus created, with two possible interpretations as referents: an idiomatic interpretation (according to which the giggling nineteen-year-old speaks disparagingly of Belkin's appearance), and a literal one (according to which she describes a bow with reference to women's fashion). The specific reference to Belkin's shabby bow tie in the original novel is lost here, however, along with the pun on "*babochka*," with its referents "bow tie" and "butterfly."[20]

The pun on "*babochka*" bears further significance within the context of the original novel, as it serves to pay homage to Vladimir Nabokov (Hansen

19. While the bow tie is described as "maroon" in the original (Grushin 2005: 19), the translation elaborates on this with the idiom "*sero-buro-malinovyi*" (Grushina 2011: 29), which denotes a dull, non-descript color.

20. Another difference between the original pun and Petrova's translation lies in the varying degrees of probability of the explanations, conveyed by the pun's referents, of the meaning of the words overheard by Sukhanov. While the pun's referents in Petrova's translation offer two equally plausible explanations (i.e., a comment on Belkin's appearance, on the one hand, and a comment on women's fashion, on the other), it is arguably less plausible, within the fictional world of the original novel, that the giggling nineteen-year-old girl would be referring to lepidoptery, rather than Belkin's bow tie. The far-fetched character of lepidoptery in this context serves to highlight the implicit allusion to Nabokov.

2012a: 548), whom Grushin has named in interviews as one of her favorite writers (Bariakina; Moskalev 2006). Nabokov's works contain numerous translingual puns, and he was also an avid collector of butterflies. Butterflies and moths serve as a leitmotif throughout Grushin's novel, as, for example, in the following passage: "One single thought fluttered in him like a dying moth — why didn't I take the metro, why didn't I take the metro, why didn't I …" (Grushin 2005: 28); translated as: "V golove izdykhaiushcheĭ babochkoĭ trepetala odna tol'ko mysl': pochemu ia ne poekhal na metro, pochemu ia ne poekhal na metro, pochemu ia …" (Grushina 2011: 39). The link between neckties and butterflies established in the above-quoted passage from the original novel is later re-activated through a metaphor likening Sukhanov's purchases of designer ties on trips abroad to butterfly collecting (Grushin 2005: 74).

By alluding to Nabokov, Grushin evokes him as a predecessor and inscribes herself within the canon of translingual russo-anglophone writers. In this way, she can be seen to continue a tradition of literary translingualism:

> translingualism […] is a genuine and rich tradition, one in which authors are acutely aware of shared conditions and aspirations. Chinua Achebe responds, explicitly and implicitly, to Conrad, Eva Hoffman to Mary Antin. Both J. M. Coetzee and Raymond Federman have written extensively about Beckett. Even when Nabokov is belittling "Conrad's souvenir-shop style, bottled ships and shell necklaces of romanticist clichés" (*Strong Opinons* 42), he is acknowledging affinity with another Anglophonic author who left behind a Slavic land and language. (Kellman 2000: ix)

Although the homage paid to Nabokov through the butterfly pun is absent in the corresponding passage of Petrova's translation, the latter retains the metaphor likening Sukhanov's collection of neckties to butterfly collecting (Grushina 2011: 94). Nabokov is also explicitly evoked in two paratexts to the translation. In Grushin's preface to the Russian version, she draws a parallel between herself and Nabokov through a parenthetical aside noting that *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* was published by Putnam, which, as she further notes, is the same publishing house that brought out *Lolita* (Grushina 2011: 5). A paper band wrapped around the cover of the Russian edition exclaims "Nabokov's linguistic paradoxes come to life" ("Lingvisticheskie paradoksy Nabokova ozhivaiut!"), presenting the book, before the reader has even opened it, as a continuation of a Nabokovian tradition.[21]

21. For a discussion of the significance of paratexts with regard to Nabokov's novel *Lolita*, see Per Ambrosiani's article in this issue.

Translingual texts and translation theory

As the above examples illustrate, Russian elements stand out as foreign within the context of Grushin's anglophone novel, whereas translingual elements are less apparent — if at all visible — in the Russian translation. Berman observes a general tendency in translation to smooth out idiosyncrasies of the source language and source text in order to make them conform to conventions of the target language and thereby appear less foreign. "The principal problem of translating the novel," he argues, "is to respect its *shapeless polylogic* and avoid an arbitrary homogenization" (2012: 243). Berman draws here on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia as inherent to the novelistic genre (2012: 251–252). One of twelve negative "deforming tendencies" identified by Berman is "the effacement of the superimposition of languages," rendering the target text more monolingual than the source text and reducing variation between dialects, idiolects, or languages (2012: 244). Similarly, as noted above, Venuti argues that the translator's striving to meet expectations of fluency on the part of editors, publishers, reviewers, and readers results in an "illusion of transparency" that reduces or eliminates non-familiar elements in the target text (1995: 1). Instead, Venuti advocates what he calls "foreignizing translation," which involves "developing translation methods along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language," thus making the translator visible within the text (1995: 242).

Venuti describes foreignization as impelling the target-language culture "to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad," as opposed to "bringing the author back home" through a domesticating approach (1995: 20). Here Venuti paraphrases Friedrich Schleiermacher's formulation of the two choices available to the translator: "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" ([1813] 2012: 49). Schleiermacher's preference was for the former, foreignizing method, which has been invoked in recent years by several translation theorists, most notably Berman and Venuti, who view foreignizing translation as an ethical stance against English-language dominance.

Several recent analyses of translations of multilingual works focus on how translation strategies reflect power imbalances within and between languages and cultures.[22] In the case of Petrova's translation, however, the domesticating effect observed above cannot be explained by unequal relations between English and Russian. While Grushin has explicitly expressed her intention to 'foreignize' the

22. See, for example, Boyden and Goethals (2011), Grutman (2006), Meylaerts (2006), and Stratford (2008).

world she depicts for anglophone readers by incorporating Russian words, idioms, and cultural phenomena into the original text, there is no comparable relation of foreignness between the fictional world and the target readers of the Russian translation. In the Russian version, the language of the text corresponds to the setting and the language spoken in the fictional world. Taking into consideration the novel's plot and setting, as well as the target audience of the Russian translation, it would seem unmotivated to incorporate English words, idioms, and puns into the Russian translation to the same extent that translingual elements occur in the original.

Grushin's novel — and indeed translingual texts in general — may well comprise a special case that does not easily lend itself to either of the approaches articulated by Schleiermacher. Translation theory has often assumed a correlation between source language and source culture, target language and target culture. Yet translingual literature tends to challenge readers by reversing or disrupting these correlations, mixing cultures as well as languages. When a translation is made into "none other than embedded foreign language of the source text," as Rainier Grutman argues, "the linguistic elements that signalled Otherness in the original run the risk of having their indexical meaning reversed and being read as 'familiar' signs of Sameness" (2006: 22). Rather than "sending the reader abroad," Petrova's translation of Grushin's novel can be seen to bring the text home to its cultural subtext, as well as to readers familiar with the very elements that appear foreign to the source audience, resulting in a kind of domestication by default.

This domesticating or homogenizing effect cannot be explained by the economic and culturally hegemonic mechanisms that both Venuti and Lennon observe in the publishing world. In this case, the "illusion of transparency" of which Venuti speaks is created not by any erasure or adaptation on the part of the translator, but by virtue of the target audience's cultural context, which renders strangeness less visible within the familiar. As I have shown elsewhere, a sense of the uncanny on the part of the novel's protagonist Sukhanov is central to the novel's theme of coming to terms with the past (Hansen 2012b). Through Grushin's use of foreign elements in the anglophone text, *ostranenie* (the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization, or 'making strange,' [1917] 1990) becomes inherent to the reading process itself. "Working with a strange language," Kellman observes, "is an obvious way to defamiliarize verbal expression, and the work of translinguals … foregrounds and challenges its own medium — creates the impediment to fluency that is the hallmark of the aesthetic according to Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum and Jan Mukařovský" (2000: 29).

The resistance that Grushin's translingual elements present to non-russophone readers, who comprise the majority of the original novel's audience, can be said to be neutralized in translation. The result is not esthetically inferior, but it arguably

leads to different readings. It also raises broader questions about the translation of translingual texts. Do translingual texts present specific challenges to the translator, and if so, what can they tell us about the functions of literary translingualism? Is it useful to speak in terms of 'source' and 'target' with regard to translingual texts and their translations? Calling for more functionalist descriptive research on the translation of such texts as a "correction to a certain idealizing monolingualism," (Meylaerts 2006: 6), Reine Meylaerts argues that "implicitly or explicitly, translation is still approached as the *full* transposition of *one* (monolingual) source code into *another* (monolingual) target code for the benefit of a *monolingual* target public" (2006: 5). As Lennon observes, "Translators have traditionally been called upon to play the role of regulator, to keep languages separate. But when two languages intermingle … translation is put to the test" (2010: 15).

Literary translingualism can be viewed as an extreme case of what Berman characterizes as the polylingualism of the novelistic genre, which contains "the enormous brew of languages and linguistic systems that operate in the work," and "mobilizes and activates the totality of 'languages' that coexist in any language" (2012: 243). The operation of these linguistic systems becomes more visible in translingual texts, which push the limits of the language(s) in which they are written. The resulting defamiliarizing effect is potentially present in all literary texts; as Jacques Derrida argues in *Monolingualism of the Other: Or, the Prothesis of Origin*, all language entails "an essential alienation" (1998: 58).[23] By constantly moving between two or more languages, translingual texts in particular highlight the strangeness and contingency of literary language.

Recent decades have seen an increase in the publication of translingual literature, not least among authors of the new Russian diaspora.[24] This trend can be expected to continue as a result of globalizing processes and increased migration. In addition, as Kellman points out, "a remarkable number of translinguals have been active and important as translators, brokers who position themselves between the language of an author and the language of the reader" (2000, 32). Like Nabokov, several contemporary Russian translingual writers also engage in self-translation. The translation of translingual texts promises new challenges and opportunities for translation studies, contributing to re-evaluations of a binary view of transla-

23. In a lecture to a French organization for literary translators in 1998, Derrida used translingualism and specifically the translation of wordplay as starting points for a definition of the essence of translation (2012: 367).

24. For an in-depth study of contemporary translingual Russian writers, see Wanner (2011). Monographs on literary translingualism involving other languages include Liu (1995), Chi'en (2004), and Yildiz (2012).

tion as movement from a source language to a target language.[25] As Sherry Simon notes, "models of translation theory emerge out of specific sites and are not universally applicable" (2002: 22). Translation, as Iain Chambers defines it:

> is not about transparency in which two languages come to reflect each other in a shared semantic mirror… translation moves in more than one direction: between the language, literature, and culture translated and the language, literature, and culture that translates, between an "original" and a "copy" in another language. Further, what is 'lost' in translation, in linguistic meaning, in semantic anchorage, may open up a sense, a direction, leading elsewhere. (2002: 26)

Translingual texts seem to call for a more flexible, multidimensional approach which does not take linguistic or cultural boundaries for granted. Such an approach would focus more on the unstable yet highly productive and mutually enriching space between languages, in which not only the translator but also the reader's interaction with the text becomes more visible.

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25. See, for example, Tymoczko (2006).

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