

TOTOSHKA, WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE
TRANSLATING AMERICAN-SOVIET COLD WAR TENSION THROUGH
THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ

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This project was conceived as part of a long-time interest in the Soviet Union and its relationship to America. Being myself a transplant from the former to the latter, much of my childhood exposure to American culture was filtered through Soviet analogs. I had glimpsed bits of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* through the story telling of a family member who spent his childhood devouring Alexander Volkov's Magic Land series long before I had ever heard of L. Frank Baum or knew that I would eventually come to adopt his native language. It was then that the seed for this thesis was planted, and I have many people to thank for helping me nurture its germination and eventual growth.

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INTRODUCTION

A principal concern of the Soviet Union in its formative years was, quite fittingly, the formative years: childhood. Adults had lived through the Revolution and thus could never be fully sheared of their former prejudices. Children were the freshly minted citizens of the future and it was to these youngest members of society that the leaders of the fledgling nation directed their full attention. The cultural engineers of the Soviet Union had two things to address in their construction of the new Soviet citizen: the values he would possess and the vehicles through which he would acquire them. The values themselves were at times ambiguous, but their preferred methods of transmission involved mass production and distribution. Books held a particularly special status in the Soviet Union despite its initially largely illiterate population. New cultural ideals had to be disseminated, and books were “one of the mightiest weapons in socialist education of the new generation.”¹

Many supporting institutions sprung up shortly after the Revolution to grapple with the exciting challenges presented by the newly-extolled category of Children’s Literature. The 1920s was a decade of experimentation within and heated debates over the genre, its form and its function. One side of the debate featured Kornei Chukovskii and Samuil Marshak, both children’s authors and leading intellectual figures who encouraged innovative styles and

¹ Nadezhda Krupskaja (1869-1939)—head of Narkompros (People’s Commissariat for Education), leading founder of the Pioneer movement, and wife of Vladimir Lenin—was at the forefront of developing this “weapon” of ideology. Cited in Marina Balina, “Creativity Through Restraint,” *Russian Children’s Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina et al, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3-17, 4.

structures in writing for children.² The other side was spearheaded by Nadezhda Krupskaja, whose crusade against unsuitable reading material reached its peak in the prosecution of the fairy tale, or the *skazka*.³ The word *skazka* (or *skazki* in plural form) has numerous meanings, all pertaining to story-telling. It captures the variety of the story genre—the folk tale, the literary fairy tale, and the fantasy/magic tale. Krupskaja’s attack on the *skazka* aimed at all of these; they all glorified the ruling class, reflected bourgeois ideals, and perverted young minds. Aleksandr Afanasev’s nineteenth-century compilation of Russian folk tales (a feat akin to the Brothers Grimm project) and Kornei Chukovskii’s *Crocodile* were equally ordered to proceed to the guillotine in Krupskaja’s 1924 manual of texts inappropriate for children. Krupskaja’s fervent attack on the genre did not gain tremendous momentum, however, and the fairy tale controversy was fiery but short-lived. By the mid-1930s, the state and its cultural institutions made amends with the *skazka* in its many incarnations and even began to cultivate its powers to promote ideological content.

The First Writers’ Congress in the Soviet Union convened in 1934 with the mission of organizing members of the writing profession and establishing the aesthetic bylaws of Socialist

² Kornei Chukovskii (1882-1969) wrote some of the most famous Russian-language children’s books of the twentieth century. He also translated many English children’s books and poems, including Hugh Lofting’s *Doctor Doolittle* (which he reworked and republished under the title *Doctor Aybolit*). Samuil Marshak (1887-1964), a renowned children’s poet in his own right, was instrumental in shaping Soviet children’s literature alongside writer and founder of Socialist Realism Maxim Gorky. See Victor Erlich, introduction, *Diary 1901-1969* by Kornei Chukovsky, comp. Elena Chukovskaya, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New Haven: Yale, 2005), ix-xviii; Ben Hellman, “Samuil Marshak,” *Russian Children’s Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina et al, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 217-239.

³ Balina, “Creativity Through Restraint,” 6-7.

Realism for all future Soviet literary production.⁴ Dedicated entirely to children's literature, the second day of the conference featured Samuil Marshak as the keynote speaker. Marshak sought to outline the problems of the genre still in its toddling infancy as a Soviet cultural development. "We have few books for children," he began, "We only ever hear complaints that children have nothing to read. For that reason the issue of children's literature is placed at the forefront of important issues at the First Writer's Union Congress." His lengthy talk culminated in praise of "folklore... [And] not only Russian folklore, but also the works of other nations of the USSR and of the whole world." He hoped that the children's publishing house would "reprint the best of existing Soviet literature for school children, and... print well-selected stories of Andersen, Topelius, the Brothers Grimm."⁵ Given the central importance Marshak assigned to Russian folklore in particular, it might seem surprising that he concluded his speech with an equal if not greater emphasis on the translation and adaptation of foreign works as a means of promoting the formation of a Soviet children's literature. After all, how can a culture ever learn to stand on its own if it leans on the crutch of foreign influence? Such inherent contradictions were at the heart of the project. Marshak envisioned children's literature as both a worthy and indispensable category that, apart from having a didactic purpose, had the potential to be of true literary value. Even after the Congress, he actively campaigned on behalf of the genre in order to entice fresh, talented writers to take up their pens in solidarity.

⁴ Socialist Realism is a murky and difficult to define category because its theoretical aims were never coherently canonized. Guidelines like "partisan," "proletariat," and "realistic" offer no specific aesthetic in themselves, but their supposed manifestation in the Rockwellesque posters and paintings that characterized the Soviet era has led to the rather strong association between and subsequent scholarly dismissal of kitsch and all things Socialist Realism. Katerina Clark offers a nuanced discussion of Socialist Realism in literature as a mode or a symbolic system based on model plots, rather than as a singular and consistent doctrine. See Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981).

⁵ Samuil Marshak, "Sodoklad S. I. Marshaka [Report of S. I. Marshak]," *Pervyj vsesojuznyj s'ezd sovetskih pisatelej [First Writer's Union Congress]*, (Moscow: Sovetskii pisateli, 1990), 20-38, 38. All translations in this essay are my own unless indicated otherwise.

In 1937, a Kazakhstan-born, Siberian-educated professor of mathematics and metallurgy living in Moscow answered Marshak's call. "Forgive me for reaching out to you, but I am, if I might put it this way, your 'literary godson,'" Aleksandr Melentyevich Volkov wrote. "You summoned new people to children's literature. I could not resist the temptation and began to write."⁶ At the time of his foray into children's literature, Volkov had a well-established and lengthy teaching career and was already in his forties, almost the same age as a certain American writer had been decades earlier when he wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

It is a curious coincidence that Volkov came across L. Frank Baum's American fairy tale when he did. The mathematics professor first encountered the story as part of his English language instruction in Moscow. "I read the story initially in 1934 or 1935," he wrote in his memoir, "and it charmed me with its plot and its wonderful characters... I could not part with the book... finally, I decided to translate it into Russian, reworking it in the process."⁷ The translation took about two weeks, although a number of years passed before *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* [*The Wizard of the Emerald City*] was actually published in the Soviet Union. Thanks in part to the influence of Samuil Marshak and his connections to the publishing house *Detskaia literatura*, the book was finally printed in 1939 with illustrations by Nikolai Radlov. An announcement in a literary gazette referred to the work as a "pirerabotka"—a revision or reworking (as opposed to "perevod," a translation)—"of a story of the American writer Frank Baum, *Mudretz iz strany Oz* [*The Wise Man from the country of Oz*]," almost as if

⁶ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov v vospominanijah, pis'mah i dokumentah* [The unknown Aleksandr Volkov in memoirs, letters and documents], (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta, 2006), 97.

⁷ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 96.

emphasizing its distance from its parent text.⁸ Dorothy became the easier-to-pronounce Ellie, Uncle Henry and Aunt Em became Uncle John and Aunt Anne, and Toto was both elongated and diminutivized to Totoshka. *The Wizard of the Emerald City* drew many readers and quickly became a favorite of children in the Eastern Bloc, notwithstanding its American origin and despite its publication during a turbulent time in Soviet history.

Through World War II and into the Khrushchev era, the book continued to excite readers' attention and in 1957, the illustrator Leonid Vladimirovsky approached Volkov about collaborating on a new edition of the book. This project gave Volkov a chance to incorporate changes into the work that he had been contemplating since its original publication. Two years later *The Wizard of the Emerald City* emerged in fresh robes.⁹ The Ellie of the 1959 variety exchanged her aunt and uncle for loving parents, the lonely plains for friendly neighbors, and tail-wagging Totoshka for talking Totoshka (when in Magic Land, at least). This new edition became even more popular than its earlier manifestation, as evidenced by its translation into thirteen languages, the publication of numerous original sequels, and the appearance of a film adaptation. Both as a cultural and as a commercial enterprise, *The Wizard of the Emerald City* echoed the success of its American counterpart.¹⁰

It is truly remarkable that a fairy tale as fundamentally American as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, from its capitalist underpinnings to its Midwestern topography, rose to such

⁸ "Novye Knigi" ["New books"], *Literaturnaja gazeta* [Literary gazette] [Moscow] 6 Sept. 1939: 6. Eastview. <<http://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/26818156>>.

⁹ Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 151.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the uses and adaptations of the *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in American culture, see William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*, (New York: Random House, 1993), 225-260. For a comparison of the commercial success of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* with Volkov's other writings, see Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 265.

extreme popularity in a communist state whose ideological foundations were presumably antipathetic to those same capitalist values. Volkov is a fascinating figure in the context of this historical problem because he came to the process of translating *The Wizard of the Emerald City* as an inexperienced writer, and the work was his debut into the profession. The mid-1930s were a precarious time to enter the writing sphere; there were ideological components to consider as well as kilometers of bureaucratic red tape to cut through. As a new writer, Volkov had to grapple with the freshly prescribed “ideological” themes that children’s literature was concerned with at the time, and as a pedagogue, he was in the privileged position of actively shaping what those themes ought to have been.¹¹ Precisely because of his dual role as amateur author and professional pedagogue, Volkov offers a window into what values fairy tales hoped to convey to children during a culturally formative period of the Soviet Union.

The circumstances and the significance of this peculiar historical happenstance have not been fully explored. Ukrainian literary critic Miron Petrovskij is the first scholar to give the translation-adaptations that populated Soviet children’s culture serious consideration in his book *Knigi nashego detstva [Books of our childhood]*.¹² Petrovskij weaves an entertaining account of how Volkov came upon L. Frank Baum’s American fairy tale and decided to make it his own. He deeply immerses himself in Kantian and transcendentalist interpretation of Baum’s original text, but his study ultimately offers little serious comparative analysis of the historical problem it poses. In a similar vein, children’s literature scholar Maria Nikolajeva mentions *The Wizard of the Emerald City* in reference to the translation-adaptation subgenre of children’s literature in

¹¹ “[A] 1936 decree condemning ‘pedological perversions’, through signifying a move back towards conservatism in the field of educational policy... by completely discrediting child psychologists... gave unchallenged authority to other experts—teachers, children’s writers—as commentators on the minds and needs of children.” Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*, (New Haven: Yale University, 2007), 96.

¹² Miron Petrovskij, *Knigi nashego detstva [Books of Our Childhood]*, (St. Petersburg: Ivan Limbash, 2006).

Soviet Union in her article “Russian Children’s Literature Before and After Perestroika,” but she takes the case of Volkov’s book for granted as yet another exemplar of an ideologically-packed landscape.¹³

Surprisingly, Nikolajeva’s cursory essay is the only source on this topic consistently mentioned by subsequent scholars who generally neglect to cite one another. One such scholar, Moscow-based literary critic Xenia Mitrokhina, offers the first actual side-by-side reading of the American and Soviet Oz books in “The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets.”¹⁴ Mitrokhina’s driving argument is that Volkov’s adaptation of Oz is very “Soviet,” at times ambivalent toward authority, but most servile to the ideologies of the regime in power. Her comparison does identify some notable discrepancies between Baum’s text and Volkov’s 1959 edition, but she fails to engage fully with the historical context of both works, and neglects to account for the changes between the 1939 and the 1959 editions of *The Wizard of the Emerald City*. Equally problematic is her failure to take a stance on *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which she offhandedly treats as possibly a populist allegory along the lines of the interpretation developed by American educator and author Henry Littlefield.

Anne Nesbet, a professor of Slavic literature, treats Baum’s book alongside Volkov’s two versions in the historical context of a late nineteenth-century America and an early twentieth-century Soviet Union.¹⁵ The focus of her article is not so much *The Wizard of the Emerald City* in tandem with *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as it is Volkov the great humbug, cleverly

¹³ Maria Nikolajeva, "Russian Children's Literature Before and After Perestroika," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 20.3 (1995): 105-111.

¹⁴ Xenia Mitrokhina, "The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 21.4 (1996): 186-188.

¹⁵ Anne Nesbet, "In Borrowed Balloons: The Wizard of Oz and the History of Soviet Aviation," *The Slavic and Eastern European Journal*, 45.1 (2001), 80-95.

appropriating American fairy tales and French flight ventures for the Soviet Union while distancing himself from their authentic origins.¹⁶ Nesbet is not overtly hostile to Volkov as a literary figure, but she belabors the plagiaristic aspects of his translation-adaptation to an extent that obscures the relevance of an American fairy tale to a Soviet context. In other words, she fails to address the question: why *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*?

This question is taken up, on the other hand, by professor of translation Judith Inggs, who argues that, rather than being an instance of plagiarism, Volkov's adaptation of an American fairy tale is an exemplary illustration of creativity at work under the yoke of state censorship.¹⁷ Censorship, Inggs argues, is the driving force behind Volkov's translation, and without that particular element of the Soviet publishing system, *The Wizard of the Emerald City* would not have become what it was. No doubt there is some truth to her point, but Inggs relies on a questionable report about Volkov's initial version being rejected by censors to form the basis of her argument, an assumption that is quite misleading and certainly not based on any primary sources she directly cites. Volkov did have difficulty in publishing his adaptation in the late 1930s, but much of those difficulties had to do with the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the writing profession as well as with his lack of experience in it, and not strictly with the red pen of the censors.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 86-87. While Volkov was trying to publish *The Wizard of the Emerald City*, he was simultaneously trying to publish his original work of historical fiction *Chudesnyj shar [The Wonderful Balloon]* (1940), which suggested the first hot air balloonist was of Russian origin (as opposed to French like the Montgolfier brothers).

¹⁷ Judith Inggs, "Censorship and translated children's literature in the Soviet Union: The example of the Wizards *Oz* and *Goodwin*," *Target* 23.1 (2011), 77-91. Curiously, Inggs makes no reference to Nesbet's article in her work.

¹⁸ Volkov enumerates many of his troubles with getting *The Wizard of the Emerald City* published in his letters to Samuil Marshak. See Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 97-101.

A crucial contribution to the scholarship on Volkov himself is Tatiana Galkina's biography of the author. Galkina is the director of the Aleksandr Volkov archive at the Tomsk Pedagogical University in Siberia, Volkov's alma mater. Her biography of Volkov is a meticulous compilation of many of the author's memoirs, letters, and personal papers. The sources she cites are indispensable to this investigation and offer a window into Volkov's personal world that could only be otherwise glimpsed by a trip to the archive in Siberia. Most of the biographical information and primary sources pertaining to Volkov referenced in this analysis are quoted directly from Galkina's volume. In terms of analysis of *The Wizard of the Emerald City*, however, the biography draws heavily on Miron Petrovskij's interpretations and adds little new insight into the relationship between Baum's and Volkov's texts.

Among many important aspects of this literary comparison that most scholars have failed to address adequately is the fundamental form of Baum and Volkov's texts: the fairy tale, the *skazka*. Far from being mythical vestiges of an obscure past, fairy tales—especially literary fairy tales—are “historical prescriptions, internalized, potent, explosive, and we acknowledge the power they hold over our lives by mystifying them.”¹⁹ On the model of fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes, I would like to consider the fairy tale as “a symbolic public announcement” made by a particular author, or group of authors, at a particular point in time.²⁰ Whether openly or in veiled ways, a fairy tale makes a statement about certain values that older generations seek to pass down to younger generations.²¹ This is true in any culture, but it is particularly interesting in the

¹⁹ Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹ Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 128.

context of the Soviet Union and its massive project of actively constructing a Soviet children's literature.

The still inchoate scholarship on *The Wizard of the Emerald City*—usually conflating the 1939 and 1959 editions—has hitherto focused primarily on the book's points of departure from Baum's original text and has held up these differences as proof of the two societies' incompatibility, as if to say, "the societies are different as evidenced by the texts' differences." But these studies of contrast have evaded analysis through circular logic, neglecting what validates the contrast to begin with: the similarities basic to all versions of the same tale. In addressing the gaps in previous scholarship, I would like to situate *The Wizard of the Emerald City*, in both editions, within a very particular time in Soviet history with reference to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in its own historical context. Uncovering the differences between Baum's text and Volkov's 1939 edition as a point of departure, I would then like to explore the differences between Volkov's 1959 republication and its predecessor. A chronological study of all three texts is imperative to partially account not only for the story's initial success in the Soviet Union but also for its continued popularity. Such an examination consists of tracking the various changes across three different versions, but also noting the consistencies. After all, differences in the story of the Emerald City can certainly tell us what divided the United States and the Soviet Union, but what was it that united the two? Only in the convergence of the three versions of a single story is it possible to determine why it was so successful in two seemingly distinct societies.

CHAPTER I: AN AMERICAN FAIRY TALE DONS SOVIET ROBES

As a narrative category, the fairy tale is often assumed to be without concrete historical origin, but any productive discussion of the fairy tale must begin by nailing this vagabond genre into place as a historical institution. The fairy tale is a wonder tale, a story whose narrative unfolds through a series of marvelous and supernatural transformations, which separates it from other short narrative forms like fables and legends. It is also important to draw a distinction between the folk tale and the literary fairy tale; the folk tale “is a story passed down from generation to generation by oral transmission alone” whereas the literary fairy tale “is transmitted by reading and writing and is unchangeable.”²² The literary fairy tale, in being far more immutable than its orally-transmitted counterpart, has the advantage of precision; whereas the details of the folk tale change from narrator to narrator as in a game of telephone, the nuances of the literary fairy tale unfold in the same manner over and over as identical page after page rolls off the printing press. Of course, with the recording of the folk tale and the oral retelling of the literary tale, the two genres often end up bleeding into each other, but the literary fairy tale stands apart from the oral tradition in that it is a reproducible form that can be distributed to a mass audience.

The literary fairy tale as a form separate from an oral fairy tale tradition in Europe has a lengthy history, but its most vivid manifestations are crystallized in the late seventeenth century tales of Charles Perrault in France, the tales of *The Thousand and One Nights* first made available in Europe through Antoine Gallard’s translation in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the collection of German folk tales published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the

²² Vladimir Propp, *The Russian Folktale*, trans. Sibelan Forrester, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2012), 16.

first part of the nineteenth century.²³ The Perrault and Grimm collections in particular made their mark on the literary fairy tale tradition of both America and Russia (and later the Soviet Union). Tales like “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Hansel and Gretel,” featuring children journeying through forests and undertaking precarious quests against hostile forces, were both common and popular. Not to mention that they were often very grim.

In addition to embracing these foreign imports, Russia laid claim to its own supposedly native fairy tale tradition in the nineteenth century, much in the fashion of the Brothers Grimm tales. Beginning in 1838, law clerk Alexander Afanasev began to publish the tales he had collected, mostly through epistolary means, from across Russia. It was one of the first attempts to synthesize the Russian language with the peasant cultural tradition (along with the poetic reproductions of these plots by poet Alexander Pushkin), whose “coarse peasant language” had historically been at odds with Church Slavonic.²⁴ The influence and popularity of Afanasev’s collection of “peasant” tales in Russia equalled those of the brothers Grimm, although it was censored by Czar Alexander II at one point and partially published in Geneva as a result. Writer Maxim Gorky, in his defense of the fairy tale genre in numerous writings, referred to these stories as a quintessential part of *narodnost*, the sense of Russian nationality as rooted in the motherland and a principal tenet of Socialist Realism, given their intimate connection with the “authentic” Russian people and experience. “Oral poetry of a hardworking people—of a time when the poet and the proletariat came together as one—this eternal poetry, the ancestor of

²³ For a discussion of the formation of this fairy tale tradition, see Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*, (New York: Routledge, 2006). The collection of the brothers Grimm is an attempt to petrify a mostly oral tradition in print form. Once the tales were recorded (and sometimes invented in the process), they took the shape of literary fairy tales and became easily translatable from culture to culture.

²⁴ See James Riordan, “Russian Fairy Tales and their Collectors,” *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*, eds. Hilda Ellis Davidson et al, (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 217-226.

literature, greatly helped me to familiarize myself with the charming beauty and riches of our language,” he wrote in 1935.²⁵ It is this sense of peasant authenticity that the Soviet state attempted to appropriate by infusing Soviet slogans into the forms of traditional peasant folklore, thereby tracing continuity from the true *narod* to the new regime.²⁶ Just as Russian *skazki* had inspired the poetry of Alexander Pushkin and the ballet scores of Peter Tchaikovsky during the czarist era, so they were adopted for the purposes of mass cultural propaganda after the Revolution.

Marvelous transformations are the hallmark of the Russian fairy tale tradition. Possibly even more than in the stories of Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, the fantastical and the magical reign supreme in Russian *skazki*. Mermaids, forest-dwelling spirits, house-dwelling poltergeists, and baba yaga—an ambiguous matron-witch figure who flies around in a mortar with a pestle and lives in a hut standing on chicken legs—are all representative of the kind of characters that populate Russian fairy tales. Although the American fairy tale repertoire shares a general story tradition with the Russian one based on the stories of Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Scheherazad, few American children’s tales prior to L. Frank Baum’s have the same level of superstition and magic that one finds in tales like “Vasilisa the Beautiful” or “The Death of Koschei the Deathless.” American children’s literature was profoundly influenced by the Puritan tradition, which was particularly didactic in its essence.²⁷ One of the reasons *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was and continues to be such a success in the United States is because it is arguably

²⁵ Maxim Gorky, “O skazkah [On stories],” *O detskoj literature [On children’s literature]*, (Moscow: Detskaja literatura, 1968), 132-142, 142.

²⁶ See Frank Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era*, (Amork: M.E. Sharpe, 1990).

²⁷ See Seth Lehrer, *Children’s Literature: A Reader’s History from Aesop to Harry Potter*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008), 81-103.

the first American *fairy tale*.²⁸ It features all sorts of witches, good and bad, along with other fantastical creatures that Dorothy and her friends encounter along the way that were unique additions to the American story tradition. Many of the story's elements, "rather than being iterations of some ancient property of fantastic literature, are really opportunities for Baum to empty them and then fill them with his own American content." The author certainly borrowed from European and American lore, but he "approached his sources like someone on a shopping spree rather than one conducting a calculated raid."²⁹

As much as he was a shopper, L. Frank Baum was even more a salesman. Born in 1856, Baum had a comfortable American upbringing, funded in part by his father's oil business. He enjoyed theater and theatricality from a young age. He produced and starred in plays while supporting himself as a salesman. Some of his retail projects included "Baum's Castorine Company," which involved manufacturing and selling lubricating oil, and Baum's Bazaar, a dry goods store in Aberdeen, South Dakota. When he relocated to Chicago after the economy in Aberdeen neared collapse, Baum discovered a quickly growing city of consumer goods in abundance. Everything, from out-of-season fruit to seasoned prostitutes, was up for sale in Chicago and Baum found his niche working as a crockery and glass salesman for a couple of years. The aspiring children's author found success as a traveling salesman, but desire for a more sedentary lifestyle led him to look elsewhere within the retail sphere for his living: show windows. Baum combined his experience in theater with his salesman savvy to become a leading expert on the most effective ways to display merchandise, thereby increasing profits. He

²⁸ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 249.

²⁹ J. T. Barbarese, Introduction. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005), xiii-xxxiv, xxiv.

founded *The Show Window* magazine for window trimming in 1897 and the National Association of Window Trimmers in the following year.³⁰ Given Baum's illustrious career of theater and artifice along with sales and merchandising, it makes sense that he would translate his love of theatrics and retail into his writing.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, despite its straight-forward prose and seemingly sincere introduction, has attracted numerous interpretations to account for its ubiquitous success. One of the most well-known of these, beloved by high school history teachers nationwide, is Henry Littlefield's analysis of the story as a parable for the populist movement.³¹ Littlefield assumes Baum's allegiance to populism given the author's temporal and spatial proximity its inception. This allegiance, Littlefield believes, translates into a political allegory based on the movement. Dorothy is Miss Everyman, the Cowardly Lion is the presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, and the Wizard is a glib politician, to name a few examples.³² Littlefield fits every character and place with a historical counterpart. It is not unlikely that some of the symbols he identifies have a solid basis. It would be difficult to imagine that the Scarecrow were not somehow associated with an American agrarian landscape and the Tin Woodman with the industrial workforce. But, as author of *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* Michael Patrick Hearn notes, "often [Littlefield] strains metaphors to support his ideas."³³ Indeed, Littlefield admits that Baum "was not a political activist," and thus the probability of his inserting a political allegory

³⁰ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 56-60. For a full account of Baum's many hats see Katherine M. Rogers, *L. Frank Baum: Creator of Oz*, (New York: St. Martin's, 2002).

³¹ The populist movement was a mass agrarian movement in the 1890s in response to what many farmers believed to be an exploitive economic system. Populists rejected the expansion and centralization of banks and railroads, and were decidedly anti-capitalist. For more on the populist movement see Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1978.

³² Henry M. Littlefield, "The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism," *American Quarterly* 16.1 (Spring 1964), 47-58.

³³ Michael Patrick Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1973), 68.

into his first major literary success is very slim.³⁴ Baum was very much the American capitalist and his book, “far from challenging the new industrial society, endorsed its values and direction.”³⁵ Thus his attempt at “a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out” is frank, not satirical.³⁶

The more one considers *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as an essentially American cultural product, the more difficult it is to imagine how it found its way onto the bookshelves and into the magazines of generations of Young Pioneers.³⁷ Dorothy lives in Kansas, her family suffers the hardships of Great Prairie farmers, and the characters she encounters—particularly the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman—reflect the agrarian and industrial hybridity of late nineteenth century America. The Land of Oz and the Emerald City reveal the new optimistic shopper’s paradise climate of America that “allowed for new myths and dreams, all promising a life of ever-increasing abundance, comfort, and bodily pleasure.”³⁸ Given the Soviet Union’s rhetorical rejection of American values, its adaptation of America’s most popular fairy tale, which embodied these very values, is curious.

This contradictory attitude towards American culture can be glimpsed in the Soviet Union from the earliest years following its establishment. One of the most famous and ubiquitous Soviet slogans of the 1920s and 1930s was “dognat’ i peregnat’” [“to catch up with and surpass”]. It was plastered all over posters featuring competing trains, symbolizing the Soviet

³⁴ Littlefield, “The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism,” 50.

³⁵ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 251.

³⁶ L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005), 3.

³⁷ The Young Pioneer movement was the largest youth movement in the Soviet Union, and spanned almost the entirety of the Soviet era. Joining the movement was a rite of passage and refusal to join was viewed with suspicion.

³⁸ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 259.

Union's desire to reach the same level of production as the most industrialized nations and then to move beyond it.³⁹ Technology was the key to modernization and to a fully-functioning communist society and, in the early part of the twentieth century, no nation had developed the means of industrial production quite like the United States had. Thus the Soviet Union looked to American models of efficiency, namely to Fordism and Taylorism.⁴⁰ Both systems were aligned with the Marxist-Leninist principle of a perfectible society. Such a society could function at maximum efficiency like a well-oiled machine, provided all of its working parts (individual members) were in order.

Volkov envisioned himself as part of this kind of mechanism. When he finally succeeded in publishing *The Wizard of the Emerald City* after many years of setbacks, he reflected on the life cycle of the book in his journal.

And so the book went through the ordeals. It lay in editing for over a year. Then—he agreement... and the machine began to work! The artist, the copy editor, the photographer, the typists, the typesetters, the printers, the binders... And behind them—the paper makers, the textile workers, etc, etc. The great chain of human production! And the author gives it life.⁴¹

Volkov's conception of society was clearly in line with his dedication to technological progress and efficiency. He may have viewed himself as being in the upper echelons of the conveyor belt

³⁹ This slogan applied to technology in general, but also had specific uses. In 1937, Commissar of Food Industries Anastas Mikoian gave a speech titled "To catch up with and surpass America's food industry." For more on the relationship between enthusiasm mass production of consumer goods that was never quite realized beyond its rhetoric see Helena Goscilo, "Luxuriating in Lack: Plentitude and Consuming Happiness in Soviet Paintings and Posters, 1930s-1953," *Petrified Utopia*. eds. Marina Balina et al, (New York: Anthem), 2009, 53-78, 78.

⁴⁰ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, (New York: Oxford University, 1989), 146-149. Both Fordism and Taylorism were concerned with optimal output and efficiency in production. Taylorism was concerned with the idea of "scientific management" and improving worker efficiency. Fordism was characterized by its emphasis on product standardization and the notion of the assembly line. For a more detailed discussion of these systems see Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1977), 272-281.

⁴¹ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 109.

hierarchy, both as an author and as a professor (as someone setting ideas in motion), but he nevertheless shared in the idea of a perfectible society, achievable by the tweaking of its various individual nuts and bolts and accessible to everyone. Though they may often occur at a great distance from one another physically, mass production and mass consumption are not very far removed theoretically. Baum's enthusiasm for the growing consumer culture that emerged out of American industrial society and Volkov's enthusiasm for a Soviet industrial society place the two writers on a single spectrum. It is evident that the two writers were aligned philosophically-speaking where industry was concerned, whatever differences may have defined their respective books.

At first glance, the most immediately visible difference between Baum's book and Volkov's adaptation is the visual aspect that captures the reader's attention: the illustrations. Color plays a major role in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; it "[accentuates] the material and natural abundance of Oz and the Emerald City," thereby separating it from gray Kansas. Color also comes to define all of the various regions of Oz. At the time of its publication, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was the most colorful children's book to have been printed.⁴² If one may take William Denslow's vibrant illustrations as a proxy for the opulence of the United States in 1900 (or at least, the opulence of parts of its emerging cities, like Chicago), then Nikolai Radlov's illustrations serve as a fitting proxy for how the Soviet Union fared economically in 1939. Upon seeing the visual accompaniment to *The Wizard of the Emerald City* for the first time, Volkov remarked that "after the American illustrations, [the Russian ones] would take getting used to, but they pleased [him] nevertheless."⁴³ For being printed under circumstances of

⁴² Leach, *Land of Desire*, 252.

⁴³ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 107.

scarcity and for a book whose publication was consistently put on hold, Radlov's illustrations are impressive in their own way. They have a sketchy, rough-hewn quality about them, attractive in that it calls attention to human craftsmanship and not shared by Denslow's very crisp outlines and smoothly rendered numerous details. Where color is concerned, however, *The Wizard of the Emerald City* is to its American cousin as a dusty city pigeon is to a garden-dwelling peacock. On the spectrum of pigment concentration, the two could not be further apart. One could easily write off this difference in embellishment of the two books as simply being characteristic of their respective country's economies (which it is), but the difference in illustrations also underscores the innate irony of the popularity of Baum's tale in the Soviet Union. It was this modern, American fairy tale that Volkov fought to transplant to a new setting.

"I substantially abridged the book, wrung from it the water, removed the bourgeois morality typical of Anglo-Saxon literature, wrote new chapters, [and] introduced new characters," Volkov wrote in his introductory letter to Marshak.⁴⁴ The extent to which he "substantially" abridged the book is debatable; with the exception of some short passages, the only sizable excisions are the full-length account of the flying monkeys' origins, the episode with the Fighting Trees, and the visit to Dainty China Country. Volkov did add two new episodes—one featuring an encounter with a man-eating ogre right before Ellie meets the Cowardly Lion and the other a great flood shortly after the motley crew leaves the Emerald City for the last time. Many of the changes he introduced are far more subtle.

It might seem unusual, given contemporary perspectives on piracy and plagiarism, that Volkov published a book he only slightly reworked under his own name. Soviet translation

⁴⁴ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 97.

practices, however, tended towards adaptation rather than literal rendering. Literalism was actually frowned upon as a way of transmitting a text—an attitude that, with some exception, had been predominant in pre-Revolutionary Russia as well.⁴⁵ It is also worth noting that the history of translated children’s literature is the history of adaptation and appropriation due to the primarily didactic purpose of the genre. An adaptation of a foreign children’s book can include excisions and additions, alterations and explanations, all “based on the assumptions—often arbitrary—about young readers’ ‘needs and interests.’”⁴⁶ When Volkov intentionally reshaped Baum’s fairy tale, he did so under certain assumptions about children in the Soviet Union, their needs, and their interests. Given the extreme popularity of his Magic Land series in the Soviet bloc, his assumptions must have been fairly accurate.

One of the most obvious literary challenges Volkov had to confront was the setting of his story. By the 1930s, an increasingly fixed image of America as an exploitative Other to the benevolent atmosphere of the Soviet Union was beginning to infiltrate children’s literature. Stalinism and the First Five Year Plan brought with it curious publications. In 1930, Il’ia Marshak, engineer and younger brother of Volkov’s literary godfather, wrote *The Story of the Great Plan*, a utopian rendering of Stalin’s economic policy in the form of a children’s tale. Among its many praises of the Soviet future to come, it contained a parable of American capitalism and its dehumanizing, enslaving ethos.⁴⁷ Equally ideological portrayals of America emerged in the writing of the older Marshak who, notwithstanding what seemed to be his private

⁴⁵ For more on literary translation in Russia and the Soviet Union see Maurice Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1997).

⁴⁶ Maria Nikolajeva, “What do we translate when we translate children’s literature?,” *Beyond Babar: The European Tradition in Children’s Literature*, ed. Sandra L. Beckett et al, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 277-297.

⁴⁷ John McCannon, “Technological and scientific utopias in Soviet children’s literature, 1921-1932,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 34.4 (Spring 2001): 153-169, 161-164.

admiration of American industry, published “Mister Twister” in 1933. The story features an American tourist who is not permitted to stay in any hotel in Moscow because he is racist; playing on American social tensions was one way of distinguishing the Soviet commitment to internationalism and social equality, whether such a commitment had any basis in daily life or not.⁴⁸ Stories like “Mister Twister” circulated widely, to the point where even former ex-patriots of the Soviet Union, born decades after its publication, can recite lines from it by heart. In spite of the negative portrayals of America that saturated children’s literature at the time he translated *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, however, Volkov kept his revised story in an American setting.

In summarizing his story cycle, Volkov explained that Magic Land (as he termed his Land of Oz) lay “somewhere in the center of the North American continent, and getting there was not easy.”⁴⁹ From a narrative standpoint, the sweeping expanse of the North American mainland in the Soviet imagination made it a likely setting for a tucked away parallel universe like Magic Land. Peter L. Blystone, the English translator of the Magic Land cycle, speculates that from Volkov’s point of view the “country perhaps appeared sufficiently vast to him to make this sufficiently possible—just as an American writer might think nothing of setting a story ‘somewhere in Siberia’ without worrying about whether or not it portrayed the real Siberia accurately.”⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, Volkov introduced certain elements into his imagined American landscape to reposition the story, in all its Americanness, as the Soviet Union.

Whereas Dorothy lives “in the midst of the great Kansas prairies,” Ellie lives “in the midst of the

⁴⁸ Hellman, “Samuil Marshak,” 212-239. Ironically, in a personal letter to his family, Marshak referred to the damming of a river as “a huge American town... taking shape,” supposedly an admirable event.

⁴⁹ Aleksandr Volkov, “Chetyre puteshestvija v volshebnuju stranu” [Four Journeys into the Magic Land], *Detskaia literatura*, 9 (September 1968): 22-24, 22.

⁵⁰ Peter L. Blystone, “Translator’s Afterword,” *Tales of Magic Land 1 by Aleksandr Volkov*, (New York: Red Branch Press, 1991), 331-337, 333.

great Kansas steppe.”⁵¹ There does exist a Russian equivalent of the word “prairie” that denotes North American terrain, but Volkov chose not to use it. Volkov was a native of Kazakhstan and spent his university years in Siberia, the steppe was thus a more fitting choice for a writer so thoroughly steeped in a Eurasian landscape. In a similar vein, Volkov introduced the idea of Kansas as Ellie’s motherland, her *rodina*, into his story.⁵² When Ellie wishes to return to Kansas, she does not simply wish to return to the place where she lives, but to the place to which she is spiritually bound by birth. Of course to a Russian audience the word *rodina* can only really evoke one motherland: the one from which the word originates, and so the Kansas of Ellie is ironically Mother Russia (or the Soviet Union). A comparable thread is woven through the topography of Magic Land. While the Munchkins warn Dorothy in Baum’s unadorned prose that she “must pass through rough and dangerous places” to reach Oz, the Zhevuny in Volkov’s story warn Ellie that “there are dark forests with frightening beasts, there are fast-flowing rivers [and] crossing them is dangerous.”⁵³ Traditional Russian *skazki* are all populated with those three elements, almost without exception, and Volkov’s subtly inserting them into Baum’s story is a way of pinning that fantasy realm onto a physical and mythical Russian reality. Kansas is Kansas, but it is also—and more important—the Soviet Union.

To avoid conflating the two in an inextricable way, Volkov took the liberty of excising a few lines that, had they remained, would certainly have stirred up political trouble. Villina, Volkov’s Witch of the North, avoids asking Ellie if Kansas is a civilized country so that the protagonist would not have to give an answer. Likewise, the Wizard (named James Goodwin in

⁵¹ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 13; Aleksandr Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* [*The Wizard of the Emerald City*], (Moscow: Izdatelstvo detskoi literatury, 1939), 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵³ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 35; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 10.

Volkov's book) neglects to tell Ellie that in his "country everyone must pay for everything he gets" when he explains why she must fulfill his request before he fulfills hers.⁵⁴ Such innocuous changes appear to be indicative of a translator avoiding stepping on the toes of the Stalinist regime, but they do not readily point to a Socialist Realist refashioning of any sort. One of the more noticeable alterations of this kind is when Volkov's Scarecrow (or Strasheelo, as he is called) offers Ellie some philosophical musings about his origins instead of remarking that "it is fortunate for Kansas that [she] has brains." "The straw I'm stuffed with grew up in a field, the kaftan I'm wearing a tailor made, the boots a cobbler," Strasheelo tells Ellie, "Where is my home? In the field, at the tailor's or at the cobblers?" Anne Nesbet astutely observes that Baum's original line "risks translating all too well" if "Kansas" is replaced with "the Soviet Union," and Volkov's altered line hints at a significant existential problem of Strasheelo and the story of which he is part: who made him? Was it Baum or Volkov?⁵⁵

Curiously, Volkov actually developed the details of Baum's text in certain instances. Where Baum was spontaneous or humorous, Volkov inserted meaning. He translated Baum's creatures' names literally, rendering "Munchkins" as "Zhevuny," meaning "those who munch," and "Winkies" as "Meguny," meaning "those who wink." His characters inhabit their namesakes in a way their American counterparts do not; the Zhevuny are constantly moving their jaws in a munching fashion and the Meguny are constantly winking.⁵⁶ Similarly, Volkov turned Baum's puns into character traits that he continued to weave into the story. The Scarecrow greets Dorothy "in a husky voice" and the pun never appears again. Strasheelo, on the other hand,

⁵⁴ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 25, 108; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 7, 61.

⁵⁵ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 42; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 17; Nesbet, "In Borrowed Balloons," 85.

⁵⁶ See Blystone, "Notes to the Text," 338.

greet Ellie in a “hoarse voice” and later relates to her his fear of lit matches in the same “hoarse voice.”⁵⁷ Volkov literally refashions the Tin Woodman, unironically, into the Iron Woodman (for it would have been absurd for a professor of metallurgy to concede to the possibility of tin rusting, even in a fantasy realm).⁵⁸ At times it almost seems as though Baum’s text was particularly suitable for mining in a Soviet context. Baum often used the term “comrade” instead of simply “friend,” a phrase that is comically ironic given that it precedes both the Russian Revolution and the Cold War. Volkov, of course, translated the word in all of its political connotations to “tovarisch” on every occasion.⁵⁹ There are many such trivialities from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that take on a rich life of their own in Volkov’s text, but those shimmering specks do not account for the essential differences between the two books. Beyond the nip/tuck that could be accomplished by many a translator’s scalpel is a more profound surgical procedure. Among Volkov’s serious contributions to the American fairy tale are a psychological rewiring of its characters and a restructuring of its narrative landscape.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is undeniably upbeat. Dorothy is generally confident, rarely frightened, and never in any real danger. She is protected by the Witch’s kiss and, in spite of her insistence on getting home, there is little evidence that she feels a strong attachment to either Kansas or her aunt and uncle.⁶⁰ Ellie is far less confident and far more cautious. Whereas

⁵⁷ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 35; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 13, 16.

⁵⁸ Michael Patrick Hearn speculates that Baum might have intended for the Tin Woodman’s joints to be made of iron, and therefore rustable, but that explanation does not account for the occasions on which the Tin Woodman holds back tears for fear of rust. Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, 135.

⁵⁹ A fascinating statistical analysis of the word “comrade” between the period of 1850 and 1990, courtesy of Google Ngram Viewer, shows that usage of the word in the English language peaked around the year 1900 (just around the time Baum wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*) and began to steadily decline around the early 1930s. An analysis of that same period of the word “tovarisch” in the Russian language shows the word was barely used before and around the year 1900, but its popularity began to increase shortly before the Russian Revolution, gaining momentum in the early 1930s and reaching its peak around 1949.

⁶⁰ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 255-256.

Dorothy is “not surprised in the least” when the Witch of the North disappears, Ellie is amazed. When the Scarecrow nods to Dorothy, she unhesitatingly walks right up to him, but when Strasheelo does the same to Ellie, she is frightened.⁶¹ Villina does not give Ellie the same *carte blanche* of protection that Dorothy receives from the Witch of the North. The lack of such a safety net makes Ellie more vulnerable, a characteristic shared by other characters in Volkov’s story. Even the Wizard Goodwin displays visible signs of vulnerability that Baum’s creation lacks. When Ellie tells the Wizard she is from Kansas, he briefly cracks: ““You are from Kansas?,” the voice worriedly [asks], and in it soft, human notes [are] heard. ‘And how is it there right now?’”⁶² Such a concern for what we later discover to be the Wizard’s homeland serves as foreshadowing of Goodwin’s true identity as a regular man and as a sham wizard. It also reinforces Volkov’s commitment to the idea of home and the motherland, for even the great humbug longs for his birthplace.

The development of vulnerability and psychological depth in the characters of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* is connected to the idea of home. Although it is Dorothy who famously declares, “there is no place like home,” it is Ellie who actually seems to want to return.⁶³ Kansas is remarkably dull in Baum’s book, and its ubiquitous grayness serves as a foil for the colorful excitement to come. Dorothy’s general lack of attachment to home is evident not only in the bland description of Kansas at the story’s beginning, but also in her return.

Aunt Em had just come out of the house to water the cabbages when she looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her.

⁶¹ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 27, 35; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 10, 13.

⁶² Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 61.

⁶³ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 42.

“My darling child!” she cried, folding the little girl in her arms and covering her with kisses; “where in the world did you come from?”
“From the Land of Oz,” said Dorothy, gravely. “And here is Toto, too. And oh, Aunt Em! I’m so glad to be home again.”⁶⁴

The scene is quite unremarkable in comparison to all Dorothy has seen and done in the Land of Oz. Aunt Em’s hug and question seem purely perfunctory—an affirmation of Dorothy’s return and the completion of her journey. There is a scarcity of emotional intensity in both parties. Dorothy has just returned from an unexpected and strange adventure, and yet she puts the matter blankly to her aunt, followed by a brief exclamation of joy. Is this the warm welcome that one would expect at the end of a fairy tale whose protagonist is apparently willing to relinquish all the wonders of Oz just to return home? Dorothy’s motivations to return to Kansas seem purely rhetorical; her desire for home fulfills a structural function that allow her to explore the wonderful Land of Oz.

Volkov’s Kansas, despite being gray and dull, has some sense of purpose; the drudgery that permeates Ellie’s existence has a steadfast nobility to it. After a tornado knocks over the wheelless trailer Ellie and her family live in, Uncle John always sets it upright and Ellie helps pick up their few scattered possessions—“everything [is] in its order again until the next tornado.”⁶⁵ Volkov’s addition of this sense of purpose is two-fold. It minimizes the negative portrayal of farming life; given that the 1930s was a time of suffering for many peasants forced into collective farming units, such a depiction might have hit too close to home.⁶⁶ It also reinforces the attachment and sense of belonging that Ellie feels towards Kansas, motivating her

⁶⁴ Ibid., 213.

⁶⁵ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 3.

⁶⁶ Inggs, “Censorship and translated children’s literature in the Soviet Union,” 85.

desire to return. Whereas Dorothy's return home is verging on comical in its lack of pathos, Ellie's return home almost justifies her undertaking her entire journey.

Ellie found herself in the arms of Aunt Em, who showered Ellie's little face with kisses and tears.

"Did you return from the heavenly realm, my dear?"

"Oh, I was in the land of Goodwin!" Ellie answered simply. "There are many interesting things there, but I constantly thought of you... and... did Uncle John go to the fair?"

"Not yet, my child!" [Uncle John] replied between laughter and tears. "How could we be thinking about the fair when we had taken you for dead and grieved you terribly!"

Many days passed, filled with Ellie's never-ending stories about the astonishing land of Goodwin, of her faithful friends—the Wise Strasheelo, the Iron Woodman and the Unflinching Lion. Then Uncle John went to a neighboring town's fair and took the girl to the circus. There Ellie unexpectedly met Goodwin, and their happiness was boundless.⁶⁷

Here is an episode that demonstrates Ellie's closeness to her aunt and uncle (who were very obviously worried and distraught over her absence), her genuine enthusiasm about being home, and her desire to share stories of her travels. The degree of importance of home for Dorothy and Ellie determines which point of each protagonist's respective journey is most important. For Dorothy, it is the trip to Oz and what she finds there that matters most. For Ellie, the emphasis is split. Volkov convincingly weights the pull of Kansas as Ellie's motherland; her desire to return is believable but it does not completely subvert the existence or importance of Magic Land.

Magic Land is every bit as wonderful as the Land of Oz, but it is also far more terrifying. As Xenia Mitrokhina rightly notes, Baum omits the violence and terror typical of children's stories in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, but "Volkov reintroduces these nightmares, thereby increasing the odds against Ellie's success and heightening our sense of her powerlessness."⁶⁸ The first nightmare Volkov writes into the story is Ellie's encounter with a man-eating ogre. By following a decoy sign promising to fulfill her wishes, Ellie almost ends up being diced and

⁶⁷ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 124.

⁶⁸ Mitrokhina, "The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets," 185.

devoured. Mitrokhina reads this episode as providing insight into Volkov's outlook on authority of the Soviet Union, since Ellie is punished when she does not follow the directions of Villina's Magic Book. This interpretation presumes that the 1959 version that Mitrokhina bases her argument on is consistent with Volkov's 1939 version in this respect, but precisely because the Magic Book and the directions it contains are a 1959 addition, this explanation is not as convincing in this particular context as it will be later on. Judith Inggs's observation that the vulnerability and foolishness Ellie demonstrates in this episode, not to mention the flavor of danger and uncertainty that the encounter lends the fairy tale, are the reasons for Volkov's including it.⁶⁹ This reading seems far more likely given Volkov's strong attempt to introduce psychological depth, or at least the potential for character development, into his version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The ogre episode also foreshadows the disillusionment that Ellie and her friends will come up against when they discover the Wizard is a humbug. "It was cunning of me to hang the sign! You think I will actually fulfill your wishes? As if! I did it on purpose, to lure simpletons like yourself," the ogre gloats.⁷⁰ The ogre is a shrewd and evil ad man, and appears to be a precursor to and a foil for the Wizard. After all, the Wizard is also adept at false advertising, but as we shall later see, his tricks and illusions do not quite reek of the same disappointment.

The other episode Volkov adds to the story features a deluge. It is equally frightening, and the characters' chance at survival seems slim because they are in an open space with no opportuniyu for cover when a torrential downpour begins. Ellie, hoping to summon the Flying Monkeys to bring her and her friends to safety, loses the Golden Cap to the wind (although she

⁶⁹ Inggs, "Censorship and translated children's literature in the Soviet Union," 86.

⁷⁰ Volkov, *Volshchnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 28.

finds it once the storm has passed). The crew is separated, the Iron Woodman completely rusts, Strasheelo's face paint is washed away so that he can neither see nor hear as he is tossed about in the water, and Ellie comes close to drowning until the Lion saves her. The after-effects of the flood are dealt with in their own episode, "In Search of Friends," in which Ellie and the Lion find their companions and fix them up.⁷¹ Unlike Baum's rather innocuous and brief incident with the Fighting Trees that can be defeated with a few strokes on an axe, Volkov's flood is long-lasting, and its effects are devastating. The protagonists have no recourse to magic, having lost the Cap, and they must weather the storm exclusively through cunning and perseverance. The introduction of the flood is indicative of the "struggle with nature" theme that was prevalent in Soviet fiction of the 1930s; "Soviet man proved himself superior to all men who had existed before by combating the natural phenomena of greatest symbolic resonance in traditional Russian oral and written literature: water and ice."⁷² Of all of Volkov's changes to Baum's text, the flood episode is the most reflective of "Soviet" motifs.

To call Volkov's first attempt at introducing Baum's story to a Soviet audience a "more or less faithful translation of *The Wizard of Oz*" is not wholly accurate.⁷³ On a surface level, the early Soviet story's subtleties opalesce in shades quite different from those of the American version. Volkov's additions and excisions, along with his nod to the Russian folkloric and fairy tale tradition, lend the book a distinct flavor, allowing it to stew comfortably in the juices of Soviet society. The profundity of the psychological development of his characters (as opposed to Baum's rather flat counterparts) also gives the story a distinct psychological makeup that

⁷¹ Ibid., 106-113.

⁷² Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 101.

⁷³ Nesbet, "In Borrowed Balloons," 82.

conveys the heightened sense of importance of human relationships while downplaying the positive thinking attitude of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The inclusion of the episodes involving the man-eating ogre and the flood and the exclusion of episodes such as the skirmish with the Fighting Trees reinforce these considerations. Volkov reintroduces some of the “heartaches and nightmares” that Baum forcibly leaves out and plays up the struggle of man against nature that Baum only marginally addresses. None of these changes distort the story beyond recognition, but they certainly demonstrate the conscious awareness of a translator straddling a divide between two ideologically and culturally different societies.

CHAPTER II: VOLKOV REVISTS *THE WIZARD*

Critical reception of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* was weak, especially because any review of the book required tiptoeing around its origins. The only official critical review of the book was written by twenty-year old author Yuri Nagibin. Nagibin reminded the book's readers that the story "was written for American children, who live in a society characterized by a cruel struggle for existence." Although Nagibin praised the story's nuances, he ultimately found it lacking, assuming that much of it was lost in translation (without, of course, his having read the original).⁷⁴ Nevertheless the book drew many readers and quickly became a favorite of children in the Eastern Bloc in spite of its American affiliation and its publication directly before the trying years of World War II. "Escaping into the story, we forgot about hunger, boots full of holes, and about the fact that we had to sew notebooks out of old newspapers," one reader who first encountered the story during the war reminisced.⁷⁵ Whether Volkov's book was truly so heartwarming is difficult to measure, but what is certain is that continued interest in the story during a time of scarce resources led to additional printings of a book whose initial publication was delayed numerous times. Between 1939 and 1941, 227,000 copies of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* were issued in the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ That number does not seem very high, especially in today's book market, but it is important not to underestimate the role of libraries,

⁷⁴ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 115. Galkina does not outright identify Yuri Nagibin as being the Soviet author Yuri Nagibin, but it seems unlikely that she could be quoting any other literary figure by the same name, even if that means that Nagibin was the tender age of twenty when he wrote the review.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 148.

⁷⁶ Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 108, 114.

casual lending and borrowing as an crucial means of book circulation in the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ If we might take a nostalgic enthusiast of Volkov's early work at her word, we find that "an owner of *The Wizard* was happy and fortunate; people signed wait lists in libraries in anticipation of the book, [and] a person who had read it looked upon one who hadn't with [a sense of] regret and superiority."⁷⁸ In a society simultaneously characterized by mass cultural production and book famine, *The Wizard of the Emerald City* appears to have been a rare gem.

Volkov's fairy tale was successful not only on the literary front, but in the world of theater as well, just as Baum's original tale had come to captivate the American public through a variety of media. The State Committee on the Arts approached Volkov in 1940 requesting he adapt "his" recently-published story for the puppet theater.⁷⁹ In setting *The Wizard of the Emerald City* for the puppet stage, however, Volkov encountered the same snail-paced bureaucratic backlash that characterized his experience with the book publishing industry. The author-translator had actually been in touch with directors of various puppet theaters as early as 1938, but ideological considerations posed numerous issues. One director criticized the story for its accidental, spontaneous (rather than willful, determinist) narrative and its flawed characters; the Wizard was a "bastard" for his trickery and the Lion an imperialist for ruling over a kingdom. "How many transformations *The Wizard* underwent during the Cold War! In one version I even made Goodwin a negro who fled Kansas to escape the whites. And all this just to save the play

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the importance and role of libraries in the Soviet Union before and after World War II see Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*, trans. Jesse M. Savage, (Stanford: Stanford University, 1997); Catriona Kelly, "'Thank You for the Wonderful Book': Soviet Child Readers and the Management of Children's Reading, 1950-75," *The Global History of Childhood Reader*, ed. Heidi Morrison, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁷⁸ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 148.

⁷⁹ Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 182. The theater, especially the puppet theater, was a popular form of children's entertainment in the Soviet Union, especially in the late 1930s and mid-1950s. Children's books were often adapted for the stage. See Kelly, *Children's World*, 463-474.

from censorship,” Volkov wrote in his journal.⁸⁰ Despite the song and dance of ideology that played out between Volkov and his editors for the puppet theater, *The Wizard of the Emerald City* continued to enjoy a tremendous success even at the peak of the Cold War. One would think that if the book were on the chopping block for its capitalist associations before World War II, then it would have been doomed after the Soviet Union and the United States emerged from the wreck of the battlefield as the world’s greatest archnemeses. Yet this was clearly not the case. The book’s popularity and attention to its problematic origins went hand-in-hand.

In the late 1930s, Volkov was, with a few notable exceptions, his own biggest advocate for his project of introducing Baum’s book to a Soviet reading public. The 1959 revised edition, however, was equally the effort of a loyal readership. In 1955, a devoted reader wrote to the publishing house requesting the book be reprinted and offering to help: “I have searched for the book in many libraries, but have not found it anywhere... If you go on to reprint the book, but you find you do not have a copy, write to me, and I will copy it out for you.”⁸¹ Leonid Vladimírsky, the new edition’s illustrator, was just as keen on the republication of his favorite childhood story and suggested the project to Volkov in 1957.⁸² Thus the book was refitted for further publication, much to the delight of its ever growing fan base.

The two years between the conception and the publication of the revised edition of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* were hardly uneventful in the long standoff between the Soviet Union and its Western nemesis. ‘Friendly competition’ is a neat oxymoron to describe the situation. “Dognat’ i peregnat’” [“to catch up with and surpass”]—the old slogan from the

⁸⁰ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 106.

⁸¹ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 150.

⁸² Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 151.

modernizing days of the regime—once more gained currency in this period, but the technological envy that characterized the earlier era of the Soviet Union was now reciprocated. The Cold War super powers’ respective quests for technological superiority played out in two symbolic ways: aviation and consumer goods. In 1957, the same year Volkov made the decision to republish his beloved American fairy tale in the Soviet Union, Sputnik was launched. A year later, the Soviet Union and the United States powers signed an agreement to hold cultural exhibitions in one another’s cities as part of an effort to promote mutual understanding.⁸³ The Soviet Union would exhibit in New York and the United States in Moscow. Just as Volkov’s book was fresh off the printing press, the American National Exhibition in Moscow opened in the summer 1959. It was to showcase the glories of consumer goods that the average American theoretically enjoyed on a regular basis thanks to the beneficence of capitalism and to serve as a leverage against Soviet aviation technology.

The Soviet fascination with aviation, as visible even in its prewar science fiction, had manifested itself triumphantly in the launch of Sputnik, but the project of claiming the aviation frontier for the Soviet Union had begun much earlier, especially through the reconstruction of the history of Russian technological achievement. “Russia is the homeland of the hot-air balloon, the helicopter, the airplane,” a Soviet encyclopedia entry from the early 1950s begins. “In 1731 in Ryazan, the scriviner Kryakutnoi created the world’s first hot-air balloon and made an ascent in it. A hot-air balloon was built in another country only in 1783, by the Montgolfier brothers.” The article is explicit in its claim that the Russians beat the French Montgolfier brothers to the punch, and goes so far as to assert a defense to the contrary by explaining that “many valuable

⁸³ Ellen Mickiewicz, “Efficacy and Evidence: Evaluating U.S. Goals at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13.4 (Fall 2011): 138-171, 138.

works by Russian scientists and inventors were credited to foreigners.”⁸⁴ The legend of the mysterious Kryakutnoi, however, was not simply an invention for the purpose of encyclopedia propaganda.

Volkov himself made a literary contribution to the annals of aviation history inspired by this same legend. His first original story, written alongside his translation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* but published one year later, was called *Chudesnyj shar [The Wonderful Balloon]*, and it raised the obscure uncorroborated account of an eighteenth-century Russian hot-air balloonist to the status of Soviet aviation fiction.⁸⁵ Volkov’s fascination with aviation and technology doubtless explains his fondness for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* at least partially; the American fairy tale does not refer to magic carpets or flying pestle and mortars, but to an object of technological achievement. The hot-air balloon in which the Wizard makes his escape is not an enchanted instrument proper to the fairy tale realm—it translates to the reality of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The same can be said about other objects in the story that serve the purpose of marvelous transformations but in themselves are not magical. In both of Volkov’s versions of the fairy tale, he elaborates on the long-bearded soldier guarding the palace of the Wizard first introduced in Baum’s story. “The soldier [is] terribly proud of his beard, which is not surprising, as it [is] unmatched in Land of Goodwin. [He takes] out his comb and mirror and [brushes] his beard into different patterns, and when he [does] so, anyone [can] enter

⁸⁴ Quoted in James von Geldern et al., eds. *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-1953*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), 480-486.

⁸⁵ For an interesting interpretation of this story see Nesbet’s “In Borrowed Balloons.” Nesbet’s study of *The Wonderful Balloon* attempts to establish a parallel between that story and Volkov’s translation of *The Wizard of the Emerald City* as a double effort on his part to claim foreign tales for the Soviet Union without crediting them. It is a clever parallel but fails to grapple with the complexities of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in a Soviet context; her analysis of *The Wonderful Sphere* in the history of Soviet aviation is stronger part of her argument.

the palace.”⁸⁶ The objects the soldier holds—the comb and the mirror—are reminiscent of two magical objects that appear in a well-known Russian fairy tale in which a cat gives a girl a comb and a mirror to help her escape from her pursuer, the infamous Baba Yaga. The comb, when tossed, transforms into a dense forest and the mirror into a deep lake. Like the earlier echoes of dark forests and fast-flowing rivers in *Magic Land*, Volkov introduces objects familiar to readers of Russian fairy tales into the story. Here the gun never goes off, however—that is to say, the objects never transform. Although they appear in a fairy tale in the hands of a bearded soldier, maybe even a *bogatyr*-type figure, they have crystallized into their ordinary forms and assumed their ordinary functions.⁸⁷ In a sense, they have lost their magical abilities, and the *bogatyr*-like soldier stands there indulging his folkloric beard with the help of these conventional instruments, much to the neglect of his prescribed duties. In contrast to everyday objects that gain transformative powers in *Magic Land*, such as the oil can, the green-colored glasses, the pins and needles, the liquid courage (presumably alcohol), and the silk-and-sawdust heart, traditionally magical objects along with traditional fairy tale figures become commonplace or defunct. Technology and innovation trump any old fairy tale magic, and one of the most notable examples of this notion is the conquest of the skies.

The hot-air balloon, although far less advanced than a satellite, is one of the earliest illustrations of the human ability to fly—not by enchantment, but by engineering. It is thus a symbol of aeronautic achievement. On a subtle level, perhaps Volkov was claiming “ballooning in the name of Russia” though his translation of *Oz* just as he was through *The Wonderful*

⁸⁶ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 56.

⁸⁷ A *bogatyr* is a knight-type character in Slavic folklore, similar to a knight of a medieval epic tale.

Balloon.⁸⁸ The “ballooning” in the Oz story, however, does not signify the same thing as the “ballooning” in the story of the adventurous scrivener. If the Soviet Union symbolically appropriated the hot-air balloon from the United States in the form of Baum’s fairy tale in 1939, while still in its “catching up” phase, then the 1959 iteration of that episode took on new meaning when it seemed that the Soviets had finally “surpassed” the Americans, aeronautically-speaking. Whereas the story’s first version would have signified a borrowing from the Americans, as with Taylorism and Fordism, then the story’s second version would have signified a triumph over the Americans—the story had taken root and survived in a hostile environment, just as industrial production had done in a mostly rural setting. Of course, the adaptation and popularity of Baum’s fairy tale did not “mean” to the Soviet reader—often unaware of the origin of the story—either the deficiency or the superiority of Soviet flight technology at either date of publication, but it certainly could have served as a subtle reminder, especially in the context of the Space Race and the Cold War, that an American wizard has the ability to fly through man-made means (even if the wizard spoke Russian).

The changes Volkov made to *The Wizard of the Emerald City* in the midst of this political climate are interesting in their lack of overall political significance. Volkov kept the setting of the story intact, but he embellished the gray Kansas of Baum’s creation and his own earlier translation. Ellie still lives in a rural environment, but instead of living amidst a “dull, gray steppe,” she is now part of a greater community.⁸⁹

Ellie knew all of her neighbors for three miles around. In the west lived Mr. Robert with his sons Bob and Deak. In the north lived old Rolf. He made wonderful windmills for the children. The vast prairie did not seem boring to Ellie; as it was her motherland, Ellie

⁸⁸ Ibid., 89.

⁸⁹ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 3.

knew no other places. Mountains and forests she saw only in pictures, and they did not beckon her, maybe because in Ellie's cheap books they were illustrated badly. When Ellie grew bored, she would take her happy dog Totoshka and go visit Bob and Dick or Mr. Rolf, from whose house she never returned without a homemade toy.⁹⁰

The scene Volkov presents in his revision functions very differently from either version that comes before it. It reinforces the idea of the motherland as presented in the 1939 translation, albeit with an ironic tint. In spite of her destitute surroundings, Ellie seems genuinely satisfied; she knows and interacts with her neighbors and does not long to escape. Although, as Volkov hints, her contentment and lack of temptation for another landscape may very well be a result of her ignorance, which is promoted by the distorted representations of any potential contenders. One would be hard-pressed not to read the cultural milieu of the Soviet Union throughout the entirety of the Cold War into this passage; the grass cannot be greener on the other side if one never sees the other side (or only sees it through a warped mirror). The amount of rhetorical effort that the Soviet government expended to either build up the Soviet or downplay the American quality of life was quite astonishing. Kansas of Volkov's 1959 version, despite the very Anglicized names of its additional characters, reads far more like the Soviet Union than like the United States. Ellie's love for her motherland is magnified and the line "there is no place like home" takes on a new quality for someone who, having seen what she sees in Magic Land, still desires to return home. Whereas Dorothy has very little reason (and seemingly very little desire) to return to Kansas, Ellie is bound to Kansas (or her Soviet motherland, more fittingly) by a sense of belonging, and she wants to return despite all the wonders of the Emerald City.

⁹⁰ Aleksandr Volkov, *Volshebnyk izumrudnogo goroda* [*The Wizard of the Emerald City*], 1959, (Moscow: EKSMO, 2012), 5.

It is also important to note that in 1959 Ellie ceases to be an orphan. Her mother Anna and father John are just as loving as her aunt and uncle were in Volkov's 1939 edition, and Volkov even introduces a short glimpse into their interactions. Ellie reads while her mother does housework, and the two have the brief and affectionate conversation about the existence of wizards that Baum hints at originally. This episode underscores Ellie's strong relationship with her parents and further explains why she is so desperate to return home. The addition of a nuclear family unit to the 1959 story can be explained in part by changing attitudes towards orphans in the Soviet Union in those twenty years. From the 1920s into the 1930s Soviet children's literature was filled with the image of the orphan hero. This character was partially a response to the large number of children orphaned by the Civil War and partially a rhetorical manifestation of the Revolutionary ideals of self-reliance and of reforging a model citizen notwithstanding his upbringing.⁹¹ The romanticization of the orphan had ceased to be a dominant perspective by the mid 1950s, however. As early as the mid-1930s, when Volkov had completed his first translation draft, widespread juvenile delinquency was no longer treated as yet another sphere for social reform but as a problem to be dealt with through heavy discipline and one-size-fits-all institutions. The homeless child became the problem child.⁹² As a pedagogue and as a city-dweller, Volkov was surely privy to this social issue. Another potential reason for Ellie's new parents might simply be that the Soviet family had shrunk; the single-child family, or one with siblings with great age gaps, became the standard family model.⁹³ The

⁹¹ For more on this type of literature and attitudes towards orphans in this period see Marina Balina, "It's Grand to be an Orphan!": Crafting Happy Citizens in Soviet Children's Literature of the 1920s," *Petrified Utopia*, ed. Marina Balina et al., (New York: Anthem, 2009), 99-114; Kelly, *Children's World*, 193-220.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 221-257.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 396-397.

official change in Ellie's familial status, however, introduces a new consideration into the story that is at odds with one of the story's most basic principles.

The orphan in nineteenth century American literature—especially in the obvious historical example of Horatio Alger tales—is the classic rags-to-riches figure. Having no familial ties and no societal obligations, the orphan is free to make something of himself through hard work and self-reliance. The classic American dream motif is exemplified in the orphan; anyone from any background can become anything under the capitalist system. Although Baum's Dorothy has a family, her orphanhood is a symbol of her independence, in some sense. Aunt Em and Uncle Henry are her primary care givers, and she feels a superficial obligation to return home to them, but this obligation, as previously noted, has a primarily structural function in Baum's story. Dorothy is free to explore the Land of Oz, confidently and independently, and as we discover at the end of the tale, she could have fulfilled her own wish to get home just by having the silver slippers left behind by the Wicked Witch of the East.

The orphan hero of early Soviet children's literature had a similar symbolic function—he was without a class, an everyday citizen who could commit heroic acts. In short, he was the rags-to-heroism analog of the communist system who could pull himself up by his bootstraps to achieve greatness (in the non-capitalist sense, of course). Volkov, not an orphan by any means, admired this trajectory and viewed his own professional accomplishments in this light. His letter to the director of the children's literature publishing house in 1937 reads like a Soviet Horatio Alger tale:

I am the son of a peasant from a remote village in the Altai mountains. My father scraped up some pennies for my primary education. From the age of 16, I have paved my own way. With hard work I moved forward: from a teacher of primary school I became a docent at a university in a capital city, one of the best high school teachers, a many

award-winning gunman. I singlehandedly put myself through three educational institutions, learned five foreign languages.⁹⁴

It seems fitting that the message of self-reliance that comes across in Baum's story would have appealed to Volkov early in his career, especially as he was trying to break into the literary circuit of his own volition. By the time he revised his initial translation, however, Volkov had an established literary career. Perhaps the novelty of figurative orphanhood had worn off at that point.

Another change Volkov introduced into his revised story was the role of intention and purpose. Perhaps in response to the criticisms of the puppet theater director two decades earlier, Volkov carefully refashioned the episodes carried over from Baum's story that were completely spontaneous and accidental. The tornado that sweeps Dorothy's house out of Kansas and into the Land of Oz is an unpredictable force of nature in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and in Volkov's earlier translation. In the 1959 edition, however, the tornado is the product of a magic spell cast by the evil witch Gingema (a version of the Wicked Witch of the East) in her attempt to eradicate the human race.⁹⁵ That Ellie's trailer ends up landing on the Witch is no accident either. Villina reroutes the tornado when her Magic Book (another new addition) informs her of Gingema's plan.⁹⁶ The Magic Book also prophesies, though somewhat inaccurately, that the Wizard Goodwin will return Ellie to Kansas if she helps three creatures achieve their greatest wishes.⁹⁷ Thus nothing that happens to Ellie in Magic Land is purely spontaneous. There is a sense of purpose to the narrative—a guarantee that Ellie's wishes will be granted, which ultimately turns

⁹⁴ Quoted in Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 99.

⁹⁵ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1959), 9-11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

out to be untrue. Even Ellie's discovery of the Wizard's identity ceases to be an accident.

Whereas Toto's scurrying from the Cowardly Lion's roar sends him crashing into the screen hiding the Wizard and Volkov's earlier Totoshka chases a mouse straight behind that same screen, Totoshka of the 1959 translation smells the Wizard and runs behind the screen to discover him.⁹⁸ Most of the narrative disruptions that move the plot along in the two other stories are accidental, but in this later manifestation they are the direct consequence of a will or a prophesy.

The transformation of the spontaneous to the purposeful in the story is a curious one. Mitrokhina argues that Volkov's attempt to "introduce individual will as an important factor" fails because that "element is weakened rather than intensified; ...the protagonist is seen in the context of the interaction of much more powerful figures, upon whom she depends. This world view is natural for the USSR, in which personality was rigorously subordinated to the regime." The story is fatalistic and dependent on more powerful forces, which makes Baum's emphasis on self-confidence nonexistent within the Soviet context.⁹⁹ That the 1959 story is less spontaneous and more fatalistic is an accurate speculation, but the interpretation that the individual will is subject to more powerful forces, such as those of the state, needs to be reevaluated within the larger conceptual framework of Marxist-Leninist history. One of the dialectics that played out in the Socialist Realist "master plot," as Russian literature scholar Katerina Clark calls it, was the struggle between spontaneity and consciousness. Spontaneous historical occurrences lack political awareness and purpose (such as anarchic strikes or self-interested uprisings), whereas conscious ones are orchestrated by politically-aware bodies and lead to deliberate ends (utopian

⁹⁸ Ibid., 170-171.

⁹⁹ Mitrokhina, "The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets," 185. Mitrokhina takes the 1959 version to be nearly synonymous with its earlier manifestation, so her arguments do not always hold retrospectively into Soviet history.

society). Communism, in theory, is the end of this dialectic; spontaneity and consciousness are supposed to fuse and “there [shall] no longer be conflict between the natural responses of the people and the best interests of society.”¹⁰⁰ What the individual desires, society desires and vice versa. This rhetoric appeared in the Soviet Union as early as the 1930s. “The unity of interests of society and the separate person, of the state and each citizen, is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Soviet order,” declared an article in Pravda in 1936.¹⁰¹

When Ellie follows the road to see the wizard, she is looking to have her own wish granted, but she also makes three friends to take along and have their wishes granted, according to plan. Her will aligns with what prophecy dictates, and even though Ellie’s and her friends’ wishes *could* have been granted all along since they all had the things they sought within (or at least on) them, they never would have discovered their own power to grant those wishes had they not followed the plan laid out for them. The introduction of the prophecy into the story also adds a new dimension to Volkov’s earlier episodes. The ogre episode might now be interpreted as Ellie deviating from the plan by following a decoy sign and finding herself in the most dangerous situation of her entire journey. Mitrokhina interprets this transgression to mean that “any attempt to deviate from the official instructions is punishable.”¹⁰² On some level this argument is valid, but it is misleading to call Villina’s prophecy “official instructions,” because there is technically no state authority issuing it. The Magic Book’s powers, although admittedly not the most valuable, transcend the rule of Goodwin and appear to belong to some higher realm. Without the introduction of the Magic Book, it would be fair to say that “Goodwin’s flight represents the

¹⁰⁰ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 16.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, Princeton: Princeton University, 2000, 97.

¹⁰² Mitrokhina, "The Land of Oz in the Land of the Soviets," 185.

entire destruction of the system on which all [Ellie's] behavior throughout the novel has been predicated," but the book adds a higher purpose to the story that makes Goodwin's flight seem like a transgression of the system rather than its entire destruction.¹⁰³ It makes more sense to conclude that the lack of spontaneity in Volkov's revision, most likely a response to an old criticism, is reflective of this Marxist-Leninist conception of history than to see it as a political metaphor.

The revisions Volkov made to *The Wizard of the Emerald City* in 1959 are significant, but not in the ways one might expect. With a few exceptions, many of Volkov's initial subtle changes are kept intact, along with his original episodes, in the 1959 version. The change in Ellie's orphan status and the introduction of higher purpose into the story constitute the bulk of the differences and drive the philosophical wedge even further between the United States and the Soviet Union. And yet, even though Volkov may have chopped off a few of the story's limbs and replaced them with newly forged ones, the heart of the story remains intact. To discover what that heart actually looks like, we must go and see the Wizard.

¹⁰³ Loc. cit.

CHAPTER III: PULLING BACK THE IRON CURTAIN

When one speaks of comparing a translation to its urtext, the underlying assumption is that the two texts share a basis for comparison, that their genetic makeup is so similar that they are mere variations within the same species. Whether a work of literature is inherently translatable or not is subject to debate, but when we speak of one work being a translation of another, we subconsciously uphold the notion that there is something binding the two together. The two books, one the original and one the translation are like “fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.”¹⁰⁴ In following this metaphor to its conclusion, we must now, having examined the fragments separately, put them together to discover the shape of the vessel. Only once we have discerned the core shape of that vessel, or the story, can we infer what bound the two societies in which it endured.

Leaving aside any subtle or noticeable differences across the three versions of the Emerald City fairy tale, there are a few major elements that are consistently present throughout that warrant further discussion. The first of these is Dorothy’s and Ellie’s destination far away from Kansas: the Emerald City itself. A prototype of Baum’s literary urban construction can be found in the Celestial City of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.¹⁰⁵ The Emerald City, however, is not an allegorical counterpart to a Christian heaven that only the righteous can enter. Its physical prototype lay in the White City: Chicago. Baum found himself in the White City during the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. At the time Chicago was an alluring and enigmatic metropolis, characterized both by the foreboding smoke cloud that hung over it and by

¹⁰⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," Introduction, *Illuminations*, Trans. Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken, 1969), 68-82, 78.

¹⁰⁵ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 249.

the pleasures found within it. Its urban odors and its murkiness were decidedly alien, as if “the place had broken from nature,” and yet when “seen from afar, it was alive, almost magical.”¹⁰⁶ The World’s Columbian Exposition was to mark the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s coming to America, and some saw Chicago itself as “the fulfillment of a destiny that Columbus had long ago set in motion.”¹⁰⁷ Amidst social unrest and an otherwise depressed economy, the Fair was to serve “as a remarkably self-assured reminder that the nineteenth century was, after all, the greatest era of civilized progress the world had ever seen.”¹⁰⁸ It is very probable that both the Fair and Chicago served as the raw material for Baum’s fairy tale creation. Chicago’s “fountains, domes, minarets, spires, and fluttering banners suggested the architecture of the Emerald City” itself.¹⁰⁹

While Chicago may have served as Baum’s inspiration for the Emerald City, however, Volkov must have had his own model in mind. In 1929, Volkov moved to Moscow for a teaching job, and it was here that he encountered Baum’s story and began to translate it in the mid-1930s.¹¹⁰ His presence in Moscow coincided with the city’s reconstruction. St. Petersburg had been the capital of czarist Russia, and Moscow was to become “proof of the preeminence of the Soviet Union with its new system of value.”¹¹¹ The rebuilding of Moscow was as rhetorical as it was physical, maybe even more so. The architecture of the “new Moscow” was very much

¹⁰⁶ William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: Norton, 1991), 11.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 341.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 342,

¹⁰⁹ Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 46.

¹¹⁰ Galkina, *Neznakomyj Aleksandr Volkov*, 84.

¹¹¹ Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, (Cambridge: Harvard, 2011), 15.

a cultural project, and prominent artists and writers were expected to partake in it. Even the American author Theodore Dreiser, whose novel *Sister Carrie* (1900) captured the cultural and physical landscape of Baum's beloved Chicago, was asked to contribute. Unlike the *spontaneously* constructed "old city," Moscow would be a "*consciously* ordered new city."¹¹² The discourse of a "new Moscow" must have translated into Volkov's appreciation of Baum's text. Both authors espoused the virtues of modernity, and it is highly likely they would have meant their literary cities to represent actual cities. "The Emerald City is both wonderful *and* fake, just like the White City of the Columbian Exposition" (and like the idea of the "new Moscow" that was never quite realized in act like it was in rhetoric). "[It is] a vision of what an ideal city could be, and ideals have their own reality and significance."¹¹³

The Emerald City that Dorothy encounters is an abundant landscape full of shops and consumer goods. There is something for everyone, just as there had been in Baum's Bazaar.¹¹⁴ "Green candy and green pop-corn [are] offered for sale, as well as green shoes, green hats and green clothes of all sorts. At one place a man [is] selling green lemonade, and when the children [buy] it Dorothy [can] see that they [pay] for it with green pennies." There are no farm animals in sight and "everyone [seems] contented and happy and prosperous."¹¹⁵ After initially marveling at its streets and buildings, Dorothy then glimpses a plentiful consumer utopia. There are plenty of things to buy and everyone is happy; Baum's Emerald City reflected America's self-image as it prepared to enter the twentieth century—a place where everyone had "equal

¹¹² Ibid., 94-96, 116.

¹¹³ Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 82.

¹¹⁴ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 57.

¹¹⁵ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 103-104.

rights to desire the same goods and to enter the same world of comfort and luxury.”¹¹⁶ Provided they had the pennies to pay for them, the city’s inhabitants would be content to revel in the city’s material pleasures. Dorothy “earnestly” tells the wizard she does not like Oz “although it is so very beautiful.” She gives no reason for her dislike of Oz—she only mentions that she must return to Kansas lest her aunt worry.¹¹⁷ Obligation and guilt motivate her, and not any real desire to return to gray Kansas. Were her family with her, surely she would not prefer the dry plains to the lush cityscape of the Emerald City. Apparently, in the sequel *The Emerald City of Oz*, Dorothy’s aunt and uncle actually join her in Oz, leaving Kansas behind.¹¹⁸ The Emerald City is the consumer utopia free from concerns and obligations; it is an opulent shopper’s paradise, an affirmation of a rising consumer culture that Baum both endorsed and helped create during his years as a salesman. It is the Chicago of the Fair, and not the Chicago of the foreboding cloud of smoke.

As Ellie enters the Emerald City, she is impressed by its architectural façades covered in emeralds and green marble. The city’s appeal is in the grandeur of its appearance. Ellie does not see any shops full of goods, however, because Volkov excises that entire description from his first translation and keeps it that way in his revision. It is highly unlikely that Volkov removed this description of goods because it was materialistic, since he actively introduced the idea of Ellie wishing to return home to attend the county fair into both of his story versions. In the 1959 version, Ellie tells her mother that wizards ought to exist in the world so as to ensure that every child has a pair of shoes (a humble request); her mother assures her that wizards are unnecessary

¹¹⁶ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 6.

¹¹⁷ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 108.

¹¹⁸ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 258-259.

for such matters and that her father could just purchase her shoes at the fair.¹¹⁹ Goods in themselves do not appear to be an issue. It would have been rather awkward, however, to describe stores full of consumer goods when the shelves of the stores in the Soviet Union were mostly empty. As evidenced by the general ambiguity of Soviet product advertising, “plentitude thrived as a theoretical ideal that never translated into concrete experience.”¹²⁰ Acquisition of children’s goods was considered perfectly legitimate, but this acceptance did not mean that there were many children’s goods to acquire. The first department store for children in the Soviet Union opened in St. Petersburg in 1936, but its “store” aspects were questionable. Most of the space was a place to play, with “a strictly limited selection of shoddily crafted items.”¹²¹ For Volkov to enumerate the merchandise of the American Emerald City might have uncomfortably called to mind its Soviet unreality. Marveling at the city’s façades had to suffice. The literary city is a symbol of a utopia, and in the case of the Emerald City, the utopia *is* the city. It is Chicago and it is Moscow, and it represents the modern character of them both, in spite of their flaws and their ostensible detachment from the rural and the agrarian. Insofar as it can be, however, the Emerald City is “real” in both the American and the Soviet context and allows for a smooth transition from the fairy tale world to reality.

The emphasis on the plausibility of the cities extends to the plausibility of the Wizard and his magic powers in both Baum’s and Volkov’s texts. The “real” magicians of the story are not the Witches, who truly have transformative magical powers, but the humbug Wizard. The Wizard is a simple balloonist from Omaha (or Kansas, in Volkov’s stories) who was a

¹¹⁹ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1959), 7.

¹²⁰ Goscilo, “Luxuriating in Lack,” 78.

¹²¹ Kelly, *Children’s World*, 101.

ventriloquist (or an actor, in Volkov's stories) in his former days. He builds an entire city and gains respect from real witches simply by playing the part of a great wizard. When simple persuasion does not do the trick, he resorts to theatrics and gadgetry. His magic lies primarily in rhetoric and trap doors—that is to say, he builds his illusions through words and artifice. He is essentially a salesman and “he is very powerful in the modern American capitalist sense... because he is able to manipulate others to do his bidding, to make them believe what is unbelievable, [and] to do what they might not want to do” without their being conscious of it.¹²² The central importance of the Wizard in the story is signaled by his being the center of the story.¹²³ Were the story primarily about self-confidence or the value of home (and that is not to say that those are not elemental components as well), then it would not have the Wizard as its namesake, both in the United States and the Soviet Union. The story *is* about the Wizard, however, and it is his type of “magic” that came to define the twentieth century—the magic of technology and sales.

In both Baum's and Volkov's respective versions of the story, the Wizard closely resembles the “author” of that version. The American Wizard of Oz is very much the salesman. This should come as no surprise. “As a trickster himself—merchant, showman, actor—Baum identified with the Wizard.”¹²⁴ The American wizard was also modeled after P.T. Barnum, a trickster known for his public stunts. One of P.T. Barnum's stunts advertised a great mermaid while delivering a preserved monkey head with a dried fish body.¹²⁵ The Wizard of Oz is far

¹²² Leach, *Land of Desire*, 254.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹²⁴ Leach, *Land of Desire*, 254.

¹²⁵ Rogers, *L. Frank Baum*, 83.

more sophisticated, however, and “takes the form” of lady when he appears to the Scarecrow in the throne room.¹²⁶ Evidently, the Wizard takes great pride in his trickery because he goes so far as to invite his guests into his workshop and explain exactly how his illusions work. There are very slight hints at the Wizard’s trickery in his initial encounter with Dorothy and her friends in the Throne Room, but Baum almost seems to sprinkle them in for retrospective reading. When Dorothy encounters the large head, for example, the head’s movements are described in parts (“the mouth moved”; “the eyes winked”), but unless he knows ahead of time that he is being deceived, these details are easily overlooked, even by the most attentive reader.¹²⁷ One can almost sense a grinning Baum writing a manual for a particularly alluring show window in this scene. After all, the ultimate compliment to the trickster is having those he deceived acknowledge his skill at the “craft.”

Volkov’s Goodwin shares most of his traits with the Wizard of Oz, but Volkov focuses the reader’s attention on the mechanics of Goodwin’s illusion from the moment Ellie enters the Throne Room. The head has “such a convincing look, that Ellie [is] stupefied.”¹²⁸ Of course, calling attention to the “convincing look” of something inherently underscores its artifice. The elaborate description of the head and Ellie’s interaction with it continues in the same vein.

The head appeared lifeless: no wrinkles on the forehead, no folds in the lips—on the entirety of the face only the eyes were live. They turned with a puzzling agility in their sockets and stopped, facing the ceiling. When the eyes rotated in the silence of the hall, a creak could be heard, and this surprised Ellie...

“I am Goodwin, the Great and Terrible. Who are you and why do you disturb me?”

¹²⁶ Curiously, Goodwin in 1959 appears to Strasheelo as a mermaid, instead of as a lady like he did in 1939. While unconsciously approximating Baum’s original inspiration for the character, it is far more likely that the change was made as an attempt to introduce more folkloric elements into the story.

¹²⁷ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 106;108.

¹²⁸ Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 60.

Ellie noticed that the mouth of the Head did not move and that the voice, not loud and actually quite pleasant, sounded as if it came from the side.¹²⁹

The illusions of Goodwin are very transparent, even at first glance. Volkov calls attention to the Wizard's trickery early on, but does not altogether reject him as a character. Unlike Dorothy, who is willing to "forgive him anything" if he gets her home, Ellie has no such inclinations. Similarly, the people of the Emerald City in Volkov's translations "[remember] Goodwin for a long time, but [do] not grieve him terribly," unlike the people of the Emerald City in Baum's text, who remember him fondly.¹³⁰ That is about as much of a slap on the wrist as the Wizard gets for his deception, however. At the book's finale, Ellie runs into Goodwin and is ecstatic, whereas Dorothy never hears from the Wizard of Oz again, at least not in the first book of the series. Volkov's ultimate approval of the Wizard, despite the humbug's trickery, might actually stem from the Wizard's association with technology. Apart from the hot-air balloon that takes him in and out of Magic Land, Goodwin's "magic" consists of building elaborate mechanical structures. Although these structures are used to deceive Ellie and her friends, their designs seem to interest Volkov. Just as Baum's wizard focuses on the mechanics of his illusions in his workshop, Volkov dwells at great length on the mechanical workings and makeup of every form that Goodwin appears to take. The Wizard may be a humbug, but he is also an engineer—the Soviet engineer was held up to be a wizard in his own right.

The image of the scientist as aged wizard was appropriate to the dreamworld of the performance [in the Soviet Union]. They embodied a science that promised a rapid and magical transformation of material life. Akin to alchemists, they often looked the part with their beards, wrinkles, and eccentricities. They were able to accomplish in the performance what Stalin and his government were often unable to do in actuality: to manipulate the world of man and nature and to claim predicted and desirable results...

¹²⁹ Ibid., 160.

¹³⁰ Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 155; Volkov, *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* (1939), 102.

Miracles were possible, even obligatory, in the performative culture, and the role of the scientist was to deliver them.¹³¹

That Baum was a salesman and Volkov was a scientist is symbolic in itself, and rather than highlighting the divide between their respective societies, it signifies a point of convergence. In an industrial society, engineering and merchandising are not very far removed from one another. One treats the production side and one the consumption. Effectively, they coexist. The image of the fair is a potent symbol in the consideration of this coexistence. Whereas the county fair, such as the one Ellie hopes to attend, represents the basic sale of goods, the fair of the industrial age—fairs like the World’s Columbian Exposition and the American National Exhibition in Moscow—marks a conflation of technological progress and goods. What is displayed at the fair of the industrial age are achievements, usually in the form of goods. This spectacle is not limited to the fair even, and can be found in its more permanent though perhaps less organized manifestation: the city.

The Emerald City is the playground of the Wizard. As an engineer and a salesman, he feels right at home in a place where the strongest form of magic is not magic at all, but simply cunning and innovation. In all of his manifestations, Baum and Volkov endorse the Wizard’s character. Baum does so more openly, and almost explicitly identifies with him. That Volkov’s Wizard leaves Magic Land and joins Ellie in Kansas, however, means that the Soviet author also approves of him. What at first seems to be a point of contention between the Soviet Union and the United States—the “capitalistic” notions of mass production and consumption—actually appears to bind the two.

¹³¹ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 2000), 99-100.

CONCLUSION

The magic of Oz and Magic Land is not the magic of most traditional fairy tales. There are fantastical creatures and witches with magic powers, certainly, but with a few exceptions, the majority of the magic lies in objects of technological curiosity or in the power of persuasion; it is the magic of the modern, industrial society: supposedly attainable and accessible to everyone. Baum's traditional fairy tale references, just like Volkov's Russian folkloric embellishments are just that—embellishments. That is not to say that they are wholly useless or lacking in charm, but they are not what give the story its unique character.

The success of Baum's story in both America and the Soviet Union can be explained by its integration of the fairy tale realm with the everyday world. Oz, or Magic Land, is not a once upon a time land far, far away. It is a place accessible by the modern convenience of a hot-air balloon. The enchantments of the Emerald City—its abundance, its glimmer—are readily available if one only agrees to participate in their wholesale delusion by putting on the green-colored glasses. Despite the trickery of the wizard and the illusion perpetuated by the the lenses of emerald glasses, it is important to remember that in the reality of the story itself, the city does exist. Its inhabitants have houses, own businesses, and walk its paved streets. While they hallucinate a veneer that is not there, they nevertheless occupy some diluted version of what they hallucinate. The thing in itself is fused with its own image even though both are only bound by a thin lens and the humbuggery of a false wizard. In the context of both American consumer capitalism and Soviet "communism," such a society is not difficult to imagine. The popularity of the story in both contexts demonstrates their striking similarities in spite of the rhetoric that divided the Cold War giants.

It may be a chance coincidence that Volkov discovered Baum's story at such a formative time in Soviet history, but the time frame dividing the two authors is significant nevertheless. What the Soviet Union envisioned for itself in the 1930s was what America had been a few decades earlier when *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was first published. But the endurance of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in the Eastern bloc cannot be attributed to a refraction of American values into the Soviet Union through that fairy tale. That the translation of the story took place to begin with means that the soil had already been primed for its transplantation. In no way does that mean that there were not significant differences between the two nations—there certainly were, and all of Volkov's changes attest to that. But the values that united the two nations—modernity, industry, consumerism—allowed *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to exist successfully in both contexts. The active creation of a Soviet Children's Literature was supposed to produce a new kind of citizen, native to the Soviet Union. "A strange thing then happened."¹³² In an ironic twist of the entire project, "one of the mightiest weapons in socialist education of the new generation," as Nadezhda Krupskaja envisioned it, turned out to be a *skazka* of American origins.

¹³² Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 15.

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