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# Huck Finn's Adventures in the Land of the Soviet People

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In 1956, Alexander Kuznetsov, the Vice Chairman of the Soviet Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, commissioned a formal scholarly report on Mark Twain's reputation in the USSR in response to a letter from Bradley Kelley, of the *Redding Times*, around the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Mark Twain Library in Redding, Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> Kuznetsov's goal was ambitious: he wanted to start building a bridge over the cultural and political divide separating the Soviet Union and America, and felt—with good reason—that Twain would serve that purpose better than anyone else.<sup>2</sup> In addition to being one of the best-selling American writers in the USSR,<sup>3</sup> Twain had tangible personal connections to Russia: He had visited and written about the country in *The Innocents Abroad*; he had been a friend of such famous Russian authors as Maxim Gorky, S. M. Stephnyak-Kravchinsky, and Ivan Turgenev; he had even had a Russian son-in-law.<sup>4</sup> Much more importantly, Twain's works had enjoyed immense popularity in Russia from the moment they had become available in Russian translations. His story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," was translated into Russian as early as 1872, and *The Gilded Age* immediately after its publication in America.<sup>5</sup> The first collection of Mark Twain's works, in eleven volumes, was published in Russia in 1896. A second edition came out in the year of Twain's death, and a complete collection in twenty-eight volumes appeared in 1911.<sup>6</sup> The prerevolutionary fascination with Twain and the Russian admiration for his satirical talents (he was often compared to Gogol in the press), only intensified after the emergence of the Soviet State, as his critical stance towards the realities of American life, his antiracist position, and his disdain for organized religion, made him extremely palatable to the new socialist government.<sup>7</sup> Between 1918 and the end of 1959, more than 10,926,000 copies of Mark Twain's books in twenty-five languages were published in the USSR.<sup>8</sup> *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* dominated the market with

eighteen editions during that same period, but *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was quite popular as well, as both novels were widely used in English-language classes in Soviet schools, and often staged by children's theaters around the country. As A. Sarukhanyan (the scholar tapped by Kuznetsov to compile the report on Mark Twain's reception history in the Soviet Union) noted: "Tom Sawyer, and even more so, Huck Finn, are favorite heroes of the Soviet boys, and Mark Twain's ... Jim holds their inalienable affection."<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet critical insistence upon the importance of Jim—not as an individual, but as a representative of a disenfranchised class—was so great that a 1926 edition of the novel came out under the title *Приключения Геккельберри Финна и беглого негра Джима* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and the runaway Negro*).<sup>10</sup> However, acknowledging the centrality of Jim to the novel's message does not mean that Russian readers had a complete, or even good, understanding of the daring originality with which Twain had approached the creation of his African American hero. The main reason for that deficiency came as a result of specific translation choices (such as the decision to avoid using any regional dialects in rendering Huck's and Jim's idiolects), consistently made by Russian translators over the years. In the following pages, I will track the history of Russia's early engagement with Twain's work as a whole, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in particular, in order to challenge Sarukhanyan's rather optimistic (and certainly ideologically motivated) conclusions about the universal appeal and deep intercultural understanding of Huck and Jim in the Russian context. My claims will be supported mostly by evidence from one representative translation—the critically acclaimed and immensely popular 1950 reaccentuation (to use Mikhail Bakhtin's term for the unavoidable altering of an original character as it transitions into a new cultural context)<sup>11</sup> of the novel by Nina Daruzes—but I will also compare it to the 1911 translation by Mikhail Engelgardt (another critically well-received version of the original, still in circulation today) in order to explore the differences in the pre- and post-Revolution Russian perceptions of *Huck Finn*.<sup>12</sup>

### **Russia Gets Acquainted with Mark Twain**

Like most other world literature during the nineteenth century, Mark Twain's writing arrived in Russia through France. Well-educated and multilingual, the Russian literati of the times kept abreast of international cultural developments by closely following all the major French publications, and then selecting the best among them to translate and share with the wider reading audience at home.<sup>13</sup> While it took some time for the French critics and readers to warm up to Mark Twain's type of humor (judged to be rather "crude" when compared to the classical masters of the comedic genre, Molière and Voltaire), the Russians had no problem understanding and appreciating it right away. Within months of the publication of Marie Thérèse Blanc's long article about Mark Twain in the July 1872 issue of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, accompanied by her translations of "The Jumping Frog," "The Judge's 'Spirited Woman,'" selections from

*The Innocents Abroad*, and two excerpts from *Roughing It*,<sup>14</sup> Биржевые вѣдомости (Stock exchange news), the popular Petersburg newspaper, printed translations of all of the same Twain texts (minus *The Innocents Abroad* pieces), thus successfully introducing their author to Russian audiences for the very first time.<sup>15</sup> In the next forty-five years prior to the Soviet Revolution, the American humorist's reputation steadily grew, with subsequent translations of virtually the whole available corpus of his work in the Tsar's land. By the end of the century, his fame was such that for Russians he had become, in P. V. Baldytsin's phrase, "the embodiment of the American national character."<sup>16</sup> This assessment of the importance of Twain as a national symbol was first recorded by Turgenev, who, after meeting Twain in Paris in 1879, proudly announced, "I have finally seen a real American, the first American that matched my expectations of what an American is supposed to be like."<sup>17</sup> But what, exactly, did Russians believe a "real" American to be like, and, more importantly, how did those expectations form in the first place?

Russians were intensely curious about America, a country with which they felt a mysterious connection mostly because they saw it as a fellow traveler, "not associated in the public mind with past wars or rivalries," and as "a newcomer to European culture" just like their own motherland.<sup>18</sup> There were very few available accounts of actual travel to the US by Russian authors during the first half of the nineteenth century, which meant that the idea of America first formed as a result of a virtual encounter with representatives of the American way of life in the works of US writers. Unlike any other Western peoples, and well before the doctrines of Socialist Realism took full force, many Russians, and especially those who did not belong to the radical intelligentsia, firmly trusted in the powers of literature to serve as a faithful mirror of reality, and therefore saw little reason to question the veracity of the images delivered to them under the guise of fiction.<sup>19</sup> For example, they accepted as true the peculiar folk customs and adventurous frontier lifestyle of the American heroes of James Fenimore Cooper, whose tales had been extremely popular since their translations entered the Russian print market in the 1820s.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Mayne Reid's stories of the Wild West were also widely admired as realistic depictions of America as the land of freedom and adventure.<sup>21</sup> Bret Harte, whose work was being translated at about the same time as Twain's in the 1870s, further established the US as an exotic locale perfectly equipped to answer the native audience's thirst for excitement and escapism.<sup>22</sup> Still, what set Twain apart from his American peers was his penchant for social satire—a virtually unexplored genre in the New World, but well-established in the Russian context. Primed to appreciate Aesopian language to the fullest by such early native talents as Nikolaï Gogol and Alexander Griboedov, nineteenth-century readers of Twain could see him as more than just a comedic writer.<sup>23</sup> This perception helped establish the Russian critical tradition of viewing his work as a powerful critique of American reality—a trend that would reach its apex during the Soviet years.<sup>24</sup> So, paradoxically, it was the Russian penchant for social criticism, best embodied by previous generations of brilliant homegrown authors, that helped establish the

nineteenth-century view of Mark Twain as the quintessential *American* author: To put it differently, the American Gogol became the model US citizen in the Russian public imagination.

Twain's popularity as a humorist and satirist best appreciated by mature audiences continued to grow as more and more of his works became available—either as individual publications, or in edited collections—in the Russian Empire.<sup>25</sup> His reputation as a brilliant children's writer took a bit longer to emerge but once it did, it dominated both the Russian and the Soviet reception of his oeuvre. Even though his all-time most successful novel in Russia, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, came out as early as 1877 (it was published in *Семейные вечера* [Family evenings], a monthly illustrated journal for children in St. Petersburg), it took six more years for it to be noticed by the critics and garner the admiration of specialists and ordinary readers.<sup>26</sup> Part of the explanation for that original lack of interest lies in the fact that children's literature in Russia was still in its infancy. It had emerged as a separate literary genre only in the 1860s, when native authors began writing exclusively for young audiences and the first publishers began specializing in children's books. Another reason for the initial neglect of *Tom Sawyer* might have had something to do with the unusual representation of childhood in the novel. Rather than the traditional paragon of mainstream morality universally expected from a child protagonist, Tom is “distinguished by pluck, imagination, vanity, and, as Twain said, ‘all the natural cussedness’ of boyhood”—all qualities that may not have appealed to Russian parents at the time.<sup>27</sup> Mark Twain had to wait until 1883 and the publication of *The Prince and the Pauper* (Twain's most popular work prior to 1917) to establish his name as a children's author in Russia, but after that year no one ever doubted his talents as a storyteller for the young ever again.<sup>28</sup> In the period between their initial publication and 1917, *Tom Sawyer* was printed in periodicals and separate volumes twenty-five times, while *The Prince and the Pauper* came out eighteen times, thus cementing their status as children's “classics” in the land of the Tsar.<sup>29</sup> While eventually becoming widely popular in the USSR as well, as Sarukhanyan claimed in his 1956 assessment of the American author's enthusiastic reception in the Soviet state, Twain's other novel for young audiences, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, took a less straightforward path to fame.<sup>30</sup>

### **Huck Finn Lights Out for the Russian Territory**

*Huck Finn* first made an appearance in Russia in 1885, when it was serialized as *Приключения Гокльберри Финна* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) in A. G. Markelova's translation in *Изящная литература* (*Fine literature*), a literary journal dedicated to the introduction of the best that foreign fiction had to offer to Russian literary connoisseurs.<sup>31</sup> The following year, it was printed as *Полождения Гека Финна* (*Adventures of Huck Finn*) in *Семейные вечера* (*Family evenings*).<sup>32</sup> Apparently, the story of Huck Finn was now deemed appropriate for the enjoyment of the whole

family, thus initiating its importance as an emerging children's classic. In 1888, the novel was popular enough to merit a publication as a separate book, *Приключения Финна* (Finn's adventures) with a print run of two thousand copies by one of St. Petersburg's best-known publishers: A. S. Suvorin. The handsome, illustrated, four hundred and eighty six-page volume was eventually reprinted in 1896.<sup>33</sup> Next, a new translation of the novel, by A. K. Somov, came out of Moscow's P. P. Soikin publishing house in 1895 under the title *Приключения Финна Гиперберинна* (Adventures of Finn Hipperberrin [sic]).<sup>34</sup> Its twelve hundred copies sold out by the following year, which necessitated a second printing. Also in 1895, a different translation with an unknown author also appeared in the No. 9 issue of the journal *Ежемесячный литературный журнал* (Monthly literary journal).<sup>35</sup> The novel was then included in the first collection of Mark Twain's works in Russia, which began publication of its eleven volumes in 1896. Titled *Приключения Финна Гекльберри, товарища Тома Сойера* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer's friend), it was issued as Volume 5 of *Собрание сочинений* (Collected works) in a brand-new translation by V. L. Rankov.<sup>36</sup>

The interest in Huck Finn's character appears to have died down over the next decade (during that same period Tom Sawyer moved to center stage for Russian readers as far as Mark Twain's creations are concerned—a position he'd enjoy for the rest of his virtual existence both in Tsarist and Soviet Russia), only to be resurrected again in 1905 with the publication in St. Petersburg of a new translation by Countess A. Z. Muravieva, titled *Приключения Гекльберри Финна: повесть для юношества всех возрастов* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A novel for the young at heart at any age).<sup>37</sup> Originally issued in an edition of three thousand and sixty copies, it was reprinted in 1906. The following year, 1907, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), translated by I. I. Aksenov, was included in the next Russian edition of Mark Twain's *Collected Works* (in twelve volumes), and was also printed separately in Moscow by the publishing house of I. D. Sytin.<sup>38</sup> Around that time Huck's fame finally began to spread beyond the two major Russian cities: For example, it was published in Kiev in 1908 in N. Grinchenko's translation, *Пригоди Гекльберри Фінна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn).<sup>39</sup>

There are several more publications of the novel before the Revolution: *Приключения Финна* (Adventures of Finn), translated by A. Annenskiaia, St. Petersburg (1909); *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), Vol. 5 (1910), in *Mark Twain's Collected Works* in eleven volumes, translated by V. G. Tan, the famous Jewish revolutionary, anthropologist, and writer; *Приключения Финна* (Adventures of Finn), translated by A. Repin (1911); and *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), in V. L. Rankov's translation, originally published in 1911 as part of *Полное собрание сочинений Марк Твена* (The complete collected works of Mark Twain), edited by Maksim Belinskii.<sup>40</sup> Another 1911 translation, by Mikhail Engelgardt, a well-known writer in his own right, is considered to be of

especially good quality and is still in circulation today.<sup>41</sup> I will use the 2019 reprint by Shelkoper Publishing in the last section of this essay.

After the Soviets came into power in 1917, the interest in Mark Twain's writing soared, as it was deemed to be ideologically relevant by the new political leadership. While his immense talents as a humorist were still acknowledged and enjoyed by reviewers and readers alike, now he was predominantly celebrated as a critic of American capitalism and the Western way of life in general. As Shelley Fisher Fishkin has noted as well, Soviet critics were among the first in the world to highlight Twain's "indignant notes about the predatory wars which the United States carried on half a century ago, or his critiques of the 'knights and henchmen of American expansionism.'"<sup>42</sup> Not surprisingly, the scathing critique of America's recent past that Twain had mounted most clearly in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, resonated with the new socialist government's views of the United States, which led to many new publications of the work within the vast territories of the USSR. As noted before, the first post-Revolution printing of the complete text of *Huck Finn* came out in 1926, during the so-called New Economic Policy (NEP) period in the history of the USSR.<sup>43</sup> Its title in Russian—*Приключения Гекльберри Финна и беглого негра Джима* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and the runaway Negro Jim*)—signals a very different, and very Soviet, perspective on the narrated events. Clearly, the reader is expected to recognize the importance of Jim's character as a representative of his race from the very beginning: Not only is he allowed to share the spotlight with Huck in the title, but he is also presented as fully capable of taking charge of his fate (as the title suggests, he has dared to escape from slavery and live a life of adventure alongside Huck Finn).<sup>44</sup> The acknowledgment of the political value of Twain's novel earned it two separate publications the following year, one of which was in a translation by Korneĭ Chukovsky, the famous poet, children's author, and theorist of translation studies in Russia. Chukovsky's reaccentuation of the original became the standard and was reprinted many times over the next thirty years, which further enhanced the popularity of *Huck Finn* in the Soviet Union during the pre-World War II period and beyond.<sup>45</sup> The number of published copies during the 1930s illustrates this trend really well: In 1933, Chukovsky's *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) was issued simultaneously by the state publishing house *Молодая гвардия* (*Young Guard*) in Moscow and Leningrad in a run of 75,325; in 1936, the state children's publisher, *Детгиз* (*Children's State Publishing House*), printed twenty-five thousand copies, and then reprinted the book again the following year, producing an additional twenty thousand copies, and again in 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, in a run of forty thousand copies. As a matter of routine, culture spread centrifugally from the capital to the more remote regions of the Soviet State, and provincial publishers also turned their attention to *Huck Finn* more often during this time: for example, Saratov's *Областное издательство* (*Regional Publishing House*) issued the novel in ten thousand copies—a significant print run for a small press—in 1937.<sup>46</sup>

The increased attention to *Huck Finn* in particular, and Mark Twain's work in general during the 1930s parallels a deliberate push on the part of the socialist intelligentsia to make world literature classics widely available to Soviet readers, including children.<sup>47</sup> This new initiative, spearheaded by the recently founded Gorky Institute of World Literature, aspired to create a "superior civilization" at home and establish the Soviet Union as the leading exponent of cultural internationalism.<sup>48</sup> The moment certainly felt right: by the time Stalin came into power, "literacy had been acquired, the populace was more educated, and now Soviet society could move toward a common culture for the educated and the masses alike."<sup>49</sup> Commissioned translations provided livelihood for many writers who otherwise could not find outlets for their creative work during Stalin's Reign of Terror, which meant that the quality of the published foreign literature improved greatly, and Russian speakers finally had reliable access to skillful renditions of Western classics. It was also during that decade that the United States became a major influence and offered a "transatlantic frame for 'world culture'" to the Russian literati.<sup>50</sup> After Franklin Roosevelt's official recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933, the cultural exchange between the two countries quickened its pace, which resulted in even more interest in America. And, just as in the preceding decades, Mark Twain was once again advertised as one of the most trustworthy chroniclers of the American way of life and praised "as a great iconoclast, critic of America's ills and foibles, one of the foremost satirists of modern time, and a classic of juvenile literature."<sup>51</sup>

Although, understandably, the Second World War considerably slowed the dissemination of world literature within the Soviet Union as a whole, it did not take very long for Soviet publishing to rev up its formidable machine for using selected foreign works for propaganda purposes again following the Allies' victory in 1945. The 1950s were a particularly exciting decade as far as publication of international classics was concerned, especially after Stalin's death and the resulting relaxation of the cultural climate. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* did very well during that time. In fact, there is no other period in the history of the Soviet engagement with the novel that can boast of comparable critical enthusiasm for the work.<sup>52</sup> Not only was it included in various selected works editions (notable here are the 1950 Rostov-on-Don collection *Марк Твен: Избранное* (Mark Twain: Selected works) with a run of twenty-five thousand, and the state publishing house Goslitizdat's 1953 run of seventy-five thousand copies), but it was also regularly issued (nine times in as many years!) as a separate book.<sup>53</sup> The majority of those new editions now were based on Nina Daruzes's 1950 translation<sup>54</sup>—much praised by Chukovsky—that became the standard and was reprinted many more times until the dissolution of the Soviet State.<sup>55</sup> To give an idea about how popular Daruzes's version of the novel was, we can simply note that in just the first ten years of its existence it reached an impressive total run of 1,230,100 copies. It was also her translation of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that is now routinely included in Russian editions of Mark Twain's collected or selected works.



Soviet critics embraced the novel's focus on the need to acknowledge human equality,<sup>56</sup> but their ideologically motivated enthusiasm for its content now was also supplemented, though to a much lesser extent, by a new appreciation of its formal originality.<sup>57</sup> Both were seen as key in establishing the foundation of American literature as a whole, and many scholars subscribed to Ernest Hemingway's judgment that all of American modern literature could be traced back to *Huck Finn*.<sup>58</sup> The focus on Twain's representation of Black Americans in post-Stalinist criticism went hand in hand with sustained scholarly efforts to reveal the importance of literature by Black authors in the history of American letters. New publications, such as Mary Bekker's 1957 monograph, *Прогрессивная негритянская литература США* (Progressive Negro literature of the USA), maintained that it was in the voices of Black Americans, deeply immersed as they were in African folklore, in the spirituals and blues, that one could uncover the true originality of American culture.<sup>59</sup> Such studies pioneered an approach to the history of US literature that would materialize across the Atlantic only towards the end of the twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> As *Huck Finn* was the first among the available American classics to feature a fully developed Black character central to the plot, it makes sense that Soviet scholars would insist upon the centrality of the book to understanding US literature as a whole.<sup>61</sup>

### **Huck Finn and Jim Speak in Russian: Monologic Translations of the Novel's Original Heteroglossia**

Given Soviet scholars' appreciation of the originality of African American voices and their influences on US writing, it is all the more surprising to discover how little they seem to have been bothered by the failure to preserve Jim's specific dialect in any of the existing Russian translations of the novel. While American literature specialists like M. N. Bobrova and M. O. Mendel'son celebrated *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as Mark Twain's greatest work because of its open denouncement of slavery and critiqued publicly what they perceived to be a largely deficient and negative American critical reception of the novel, they completely ignored the problems with the Russian versions of the text.<sup>62</sup> The larger implication of their conclusions about the proper understanding of the work is not well supported by such canonical translations as Chukovsky's or Daruze's despite the very high opinion of their artistic merits.

Soviet translation studies scholars certainly had a lot to be proud of. As V. M. Rossels has noted before, "the Soviet school had a foundation that is not typical of many other cultures: translation is an art," and its practitioners were viewed as not only trustworthy interpreters of foreign cultures, but also creative artists in their own right.<sup>63</sup> The innovative results of such an approach often managed to capture the essence of the original quite well and become masterful works of art in their own right, but some source texts consistently resisted successful linguistic transplantation to Russian soil. Soviet translators found transposing "colloquial style—slang, dialect, jargon, vulgarisms" particularly vexing, and devoted much public discussion to the

need to find, “through analysis, the ‘key’ to conveying a style or styles faithfully—an area of theory and practice that has led to the development of such critical terms as *blandscript* (gladkopolis’), *signal-translation*, *dilution-translation*.”<sup>64</sup> Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* was singled out, deservedly so, as especially challenging in this respect. Chukovsky sums up the problem every Russian translator of the work ever faced most clearly when he discusses the Explanatory that prefaces the novel:

It is written as if to terrify translators. In it they can learn to their deep sorrow that the American writer used all of seven different dialects in his novel: the Missouri [Black American] dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods dialect of the Southwest; the standard dialect of a southern region of Mississippi; and four modified varieties of the last. However talented one may be, be one even a genius, one will never manage to reproduce a single one of these seven colorful dialects in translation, because the Russian language has not the slightest lexical means for the implementation of tasks like this. ... In our language, as in any other, you will find no correspondences whatsoever to the fractures and sprains of speech which saturate the original. An unavoidable trap lies in wait here for every translator, even the most skillful.<sup>65</sup>

Chukovsky’s advice to his colleagues (advice that he also made use of in his own renditions of Mark Twain’s writing), was to “walk humbly in the path of those masters of translation who have completely refused to reproduce colloquial speech in translation.”<sup>66</sup> Rather than seeing it as a deficiency, *blandscript* for him became the best possible answer to the problem of reencoding different regional dialects and registers in Russian. In Chukovsky’s professional assessment, Daruzes’s translation of *Huck Finn* with its “most pure, correct, neutral language, without straining after any dialects,” offered an admirable example of successful reaccentuation of the original.<sup>67</sup> True, even he noted that at times the language used by Daruzes resembled Turgenyev’s style of natural descriptions more than Twain’s, but this “Russification” of certain aspects of the source text was judged to be acceptable by Chukovsky as it presumably allowed the audience to relate more closely to the viewpoints of the main characters. To put it differently, it was precisely *because of* the erasure of the original dialects that Soviet readers thought they could understand Huck and Jim so well. By stripping the cumbersome linguistic layer of difference, translators allowed Russian boys and girls the opportunity to access the true essence of the fictional heroes and, as Sarukhanyan contended, fall in love with them over and over again with each new generation.<sup>68</sup>

Chukovsky’s defense of Daruzes’s choices makes sense for several reasons. First, by refusing to attempt to engage slang, or regional or state dialects, the

translator could avoid creating an ideologically problematic hierarchy of linguistic expressions that could imply that Soviet peasants, or specific national minorities, were to be seen as somehow inferior (because tied to low-class, uneducated American characters) to others. In a country touted as a peasants' and workers' state, such a possibility would not be received well by the Party and the official critical establishment. Second, as both Huck and Jim now could speak perfectly correct Russian, there was no risk that their ideas would not be taken seriously.<sup>69</sup> Soviet children may not have known much about the real experiences of an enslaved American, but they never doubted their own abilities to understand his language (only a few words, like "Abolitionist" or "talisman," were glossed in the translation). And lastly, as even present-day translation scholars like Arthur Kunst and Lauren Leighton argue, Russian is particularly ill-equipped to capture foreign linguistic peculiarities, as "Russian dialects do not slur words or stretch them into a drawl, as English dialects do."<sup>70</sup> However, there are other ways to compensate for such translation difficulties. For example, one could try to encode substandard Russian through clitics (morphemes that carry syntactic or semantic meanings; in Russian, examples would include word endings such as -то, -те, -ка), as Daruzes also does once in a while, but she uses them too sparingly. She also misses the opportunity to enlist the help of incorrect case endings, mixed tenses, or confusion utilizing the perfect-imperfect verb aspect to convey Jim's grammar.<sup>71</sup> The end result of all of the above-mentioned artistic decisions is a problematic simplification of the main characters' complex identities, which is most damaging in the case of the African American hero.

Ultimately, what's lost in this kind of overcautious translation goes beyond the linguistic originality of the source text, as the specific idiolect is there to register a dialogic relationship between the character and his environment. Jim's speech, in particular, embodies the troubled history of racial relations in America, and helps reveal his intelligence and evolving emotional connection to Huck. The forced standardization of his language, therefore, leads to a kind of monologism that robs him of his individuality, even as he is transformed into a likable yet largely patronized hero. If, as Ronald Jenn has noted, "a polyphonic translation of a polyphonic text is in itself an ideological move," a monologic translation of a heteroglossic work is no less of an ideological effort.<sup>72</sup> As Bakhtin argued as well,<sup>73</sup> the process of cultural reaccentuation of an original may at times lead to its impoverishment, to the symbolic silencing of voices, or to the suppression of the "otherness" of the foreign culture or worldview. That is precisely what happens to Jim in Russian translations, as I will show next.

### **The Russian Jim**

Mark Twain's Jim is a "wise, perceptive man who loves his children, a person who can become a better father figure than Pap" to Huck.<sup>74</sup> Even though in the last chapters of the novel he seemingly returns to the stereotype of a loyal enslaved worker, there are

many signals throughout the text that suggest he is simply reenacting a role that the white characters expect from him. That would certainly be consistent with Twain's depiction of the runaway as a masterful manipulator of appearances and an insightful judge of human nature, capable of manipulating others to his own advantage whenever possible. From the very first entrance of Jim's character, in Chapter 2, we are witnesses "to hints and glancing suggestions that there may be an artful and self-interested deceiver at work behind the face of the gullible" enslaved Black man.<sup>75</sup> Few of those clues are preserved in the Russian translation, which offers a much more uniform, stereotypical depiction of the enslaved American as a simple, kind-hearted, generous (to the point of self-erasure) human being.<sup>76</sup> To be sure, Soviet children would feel great affection towards such a character, but that is not the Jim Mark Twain created.

Let us look at two scenes—one from the beginning, and one from the latter part of the novel—that can serve as examples of how the Russian version of Jim alters his behavior and language in order to suppress alternative interpretations of his motivation. In Chapter 4, we witness the first verbal interaction between Huck and Jim, when the boy goes to Jim to seek advice from the oracle hairball. While the English text not only puts the two characters on equal footing from the start, and even skillfully implies that Jim is in full control of the situation (he throws the hairball to the floor several times, pretends to listen to it, and cleverly submits that only money would coax the voice within to offer a reading of Huck's present conundrum and future life), the Soviet translation highlights the social differences between the interlocutors by using of the formal "Вы" (you, plural) when Jim addresses his visitor, and by truncating the African American's speech to the boy, thus underscoring the white character's superior position.

Daruzes's register choice here reflects an already existing tradition of rendering Jim's language into Russian. For example, Engelgardt also utilizes the formal form of address in Jim's interactions with Huck throughout his 1911 translation. Evidently, Tsarist Russia was not deemed ready to accept the possibility of social markers of difference being verbally disrupting, even if the existing social order did seem unfair and in need of change.<sup>77</sup> The new political realities after the Revolution, on the other hand, not just allow, but encourage class equality and egalitarian forms of expression, so it makes sense that Daruzes abandons the referential formality in Jim's interactions with Huck after this initial episode. The decision to switch to the informal "ты" also helps encode the change in their relationship once both heroes run away. Still, the initial encounter has already primed the reader to accept an inherent hierarchy of human experiences that puts Jim at a clear disadvantage. Not only does the Black man sound more deferential to the boy in Russian, but the former's ability to assess human nature and his attempt to guide the youngster towards a more morally sound future are made much less pronounced in the translation. After sharing an insightful evaluation of the internal conflict Huck's "ole father" (as he is referred to in Chapter 4 of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), must be suffering from at present, Jim offers hope:

“But you is all right.”<sup>78</sup> The pronouncement is ambiguous. On the one hand, it could refer to Huck’s future, which is predicted to be successful (Engelgardt chooses that interpretation, which he clarifies with “Для вас самих, напротив, все обстоит благополучно” [For you, conversely, everything will turn out just fine]).<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, it is also possible that Jim’s statement implies a moral judgment of Huck’s character, which would both explain more clearly why he is not afraid that the boy might immediately betray him when they meet again on the island and also anticipate the future choices Huck would make as his friendship with and loyalty to the Black man grow over time. Daruzes leaves out this sentence completely, and simply goes on to say, “У вас в жизни будет много горя, но и радости тоже порядочно” (You [formal] will have many woes in your [formal] life, but also plenty of joy).<sup>80</sup> In her interpretation of the scene, Jim does not emerge as a particularly thoughtful or perceptive adult, and the reader is just as confused about Jim’s intentions at the end of the scene as Huck is about his own forecasted ending by drowning or by hanging.

The overall trend of simplifying and shortening Jim’s speech may have been the result of Daruzes’s attempt to denote somehow his nonstandard language, but unfortunately it has led to the misrepresentation of his sophisticated, logically sound reasoning on several important occasions. As others have pointed out as well, Twain depicts Huck and Jim as very similar in their intelligence, but only Huck’s precociousness is consistently foregrounded in the Soviet version of the text.<sup>81</sup> Of particular interest here is the famous scene in which Huck tries to trick Jim into believing that the two of them had not been really separated in the fog in Chapter 15. The man’s reaction is instructive: “Well, looky here, boss, dey’s sumf’n wrong, dey is. Is it me, or who is I? Is I heah, or whah is I? Now dat’s what I wants to know.”<sup>82</sup> The repeated questioning meant to reaffirm Jim’s trust in his own experiences despite the superficially expressed doubt (something along the line of “You want me to distrust my own senses and play the role of a superficial fool, son? Fine, I’ll play along for now”), and the sarcastic semantic choice of addressing the boy as “boss,” at the very least leave open the possibility that Jim is able to see through the child’s scheme. The Russian re-accentuates this moment very differently: “Послушай, Гек, тут, ей-ей, что-то не ладно...да-да! Может, я не я? Может, я не тут, а еще где-нибудь? Вот ты что мне скажи!” (Listen, Huck, hey, hey, something is not right ... yes-yes! Maybe I’m not I? Maybe I am not here but somewhere else? Tell me that!).<sup>83</sup> As we can see, all emphases are gone, the ironically marked “boss” is replaced with a neutral “Huck,” and the original questions are significantly simplified. The twice repeated reference to Jim’s identity with its indirect suggestion of it being under attack at the core (“Is it me, or who is I”), simply becomes “I’m not I.” “Is I heah, or whah is I?”, with its implication of “how could I be anywhere else?” turns into the much more gullible “? Может, я не тут, а еще где-нибудь?” that suggests that Jim does consider it possible to be somewhere else at this moment. And, finally, “Now dat’s what I wants to know” with its focus on the self as the main source of knowledge, changes to the much more submissive “Вот

ты что мне скажи!” giving Huck, a child, the power to explain the situation to the much older man.

What follows is a lesson in humility for Huck that is significantly softened in the Russian version. Significantly, Jim stays quiet for five minutes, a noticeably long time, during which he is presumably “studying” the matter, and then emerges from that silence with an interpretation of his “dream” that reclaims his agency by foregrounding the very real emotions that are at play in his heart, and by restating the ultimate goal for their journey: The two could get into trouble with “quarrelsome people and all kinds of mean folks,” but they must be smart about it, not “talk back and aggravate them” in order to “get out of the fog and into the big clear river, which was the free States” (71). This is exactly what Jim is doing with Huck in the hopes that he, too, would learn a valuable lesson and ultimately help the fugitive achieve his freedom. What comes next is one of the most poignant moments in the whole novel, as it “is the first and perhaps the only time that he [Jim] gives direct expression to his feelings.”<sup>84</sup> When Huck, disturbed by the Black man’s ability to uncover the symbolic truth in the lie he is presented with, points to the leaves and rubbish on the raft and demands an explanation for their meaning (which he assumes Jim cannot provide), he is upbraided in the most serious and momentous manner:

What do dey stan’ for? I’s gwyne to tell you. When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin’ for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mos’ broke bekase you wuz los’, en I didn’ k’er no mo’ what become er me en de raf’. En when I wake up en fine you back agin’, all safe en soun’, de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss’ yo foot I’s so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin’ ‘bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren’s en makes ‘em ashamed. (71)

For the most part, Daruzes does a good job capturing the intensity of this speech in Russian, but she also takes away some of the incredibly human immediacy of Jim’s reaction to the disappearance of his young friend. In her version, Jim’s “heart was simply breaking” (просто сердце разрывалось) because he was “sad that you disappeared” (было жалко что ты пропал), and he “didn’t even think about what will become of [him] and the raft” (а что будет со мной и с плотом, я даже не думал). Unlike the original Jim, who breaks out in tears at the sight of his returned friend, Daruzes’s Jim “almost cries” (чуть не заплакал) and then accuses Huck of being “trash” (дрянь) because he has “poured dirt on the head” (сыплют грязь на голову) of his friends and has “made fun of them” (поднимают их на смех) (88). Huck’s sin of trying to make Jim “ashamed” of himself—a much more egregious infringement of human decency because it assumes that the victim would become unhappy with who he really is—is thus simply recast as a childish penchant for making fun of others.<sup>85</sup>

The imagined racial inferiority in Huck's perception of Jim so far in the novel is powerfully undermined as a result of this scene, and the boy feels "so mean [he] could almost kiss *his* foot to get him to take it back" ... "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a [N-word]—but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way" (71–72). Both Russian versions—Daruzes's and Engelgardt's—recognize the significance of the moment, and try to capture linguistically the moral reversal of roles and the self-abasement encoded in the white boy's decision to apologize to the Black enslaved man properly: "я переломил себя и пошел унижаться перед негром" (I overcame myself and went to humble myself in front of the Negro) (88) in Durazes's version; and, even more openly so, in Engelgardt's: "я собрался в достаточной степени с духом, чтобы войти, в свою очередь, в шалаш и смиренно просить извинения у негра" (I collected my spirit enough so that I could, in my turn, enter the tent and most humbly ask the Negro for his forgiveness) (79). While he is still unable to appreciate properly Jim's intelligence, Huck's realization that the man has real feelings is a step in the right direction. We are able to appreciate both the boy's moral growth and his limitations in the English original. The Russian translations highlight the former, and obscure the latter: As Daruzes concludes the chapter, Gek (Huck) promises not to "kid" with Jim any more ("больше я его не разыгрывал" [I didn't kid with him anymore]), and explains that "he wouldn't have played with his mind" (не стал бы морочить ему голову) if he "had known he'd be offended so" (если бы знал, что он так обидится) (88). The boy's heart is in the right place as far as the Russian interpretation of the events is concerned, and that's all that matters. The depth of Jim's own humiliation at the hands of so many previous white tricksters (including Huck), his intellectual acumen, and pedagogical skills are less transparent or worthy of note.

This treatment of Jim's character in Soviet translations of the work remains consistently monologic through the end of the era, and beyond. Simpleminded and kind-hearted in his Russian reaccentuation, the enslaved African American fades into the background of a tale largely seen as focused on the spiritual growth of a child, whose good nature ultimately prevails. While Twain's heteroglossic narrative does allow Jim's voice to be heard and appreciated alongside Huck's, in Russian, he is cast in a supporting role that hardly gives him the attention he deserves despite all Soviet proclamations to the contrary. If Sarukhanyan's claim that "Mark Twain's Negro, Jim, holds" Soviet readers' "inalienable affection," is to be believed (and there is no reason why we should not), it is because the character has paid a great price in the process of cultural transplantation.<sup>86</sup> That such translations still dominate the Russian market and are celebrated as great artistic accomplishments only highlights the need to take a much closer look at the troubling racial preconceptions held by even ideologically opposite systems of government and to try to understand better their effects on the encounter between such a complex novel as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and different foreign cultures across the globe.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In his official response to Mr. Kelley, Kuznetsov wrote:

Mark Twain is immensely popular among the Soviet people. His works have been published and republished here in large editions which have rapidly sold out.

In order to give the readers of your journal an idea about the popularity of Mark Twain books in the Soviet Union, we have asked a scientific worker of the Gorky Institute of World Literature to prepare for you a short article on the subject "Mark Twain in the Soviet Union."

I take pleasure in forwarding this article and two volumes of Mark Twain's selected works in Russian translation from my private library, together with my best wishes of success to you personally, Mr. President (Bradley Kelly) and to all the executives and staff members of the *Redding Times* and of the Mark Twain Library in Redding.

Alexander Kuznetsov, "Official Correspondence with Bradley Kelley, April 1959," "Russian Versions of Mark Twain's Books," *Mark Twain StormfieldProject, 1908–2012*, <http://twainproject.blogspot.com/2010/07/russian-versions-of-mark-twains-books.html>.

<sup>2</sup> In the first part of his letter exchange with Kelley, Kuznetsov offered the following explanation for his motivations: "I fully agree with you that cultural communications between people of different countries are one of the surest ways of maintaining peace. That is why it is especially important to strengthen cultural ties between the Soviet and American peoples" (Kuznetsov, "Official Correspondence with Bradley Kelley").

<sup>3</sup> During the Soviet period under consideration in this essay, 1917–1959, Mark Twain came second only to Jack London on the Soviet All Time Best Seller List, with a total of two hundred and fifty-six titles. See Melville J. Ruggles, "American Books in Soviet Publishing," *Slavic Review* 20, no. 3 (1961): 424.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Parry, "Mark Twain in Russia," *Books Abroad* 15, no. 2 (1941): 169.

<sup>5</sup> See Aaron W. Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia* (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1974), 107.

<sup>6</sup> Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 1–13.

<sup>7</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of Mark Twain's translations and reception in the Russian press prior to 1917, see E. A. Stetsenko, "Марк Твен в русской дореволюционной периодической печати" (Mark Twain in the Russian prerevolutionary periodicals), Parts 1



and 2, *Studia Litterarum*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2017): 120–43, and vol. 2, no. 3 (2017): 166–89.

<sup>8</sup> Ruggles, “American Books in Soviet Publishing,” 424.

<sup>9</sup> A. Sarukhanyan, “Mark Twain in Russia,” <http://twainproject.blogspot.com>.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Геккельберри Финна и беглого негра Джима* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and the runaway Negro Jim), trans. unknown (Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardia, 1926).

<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin introduces the term first in M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), esp. 419–22, where he uses it to discuss the possible outcomes of dialogic encounters with novelistic heroes in different cultural contexts and times.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Геккельберри Финна* (Prikluchenia Gekl’beri Fina; Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. Nina Daruzes (Moscow: Detgiz, 1955); and Марк Твен, *Приключения Геккельберри Финна* (Prikluchenia Gekl’beri Fina; Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. Mikhail Engelgardt (Charleston, SC: Shelkoper Publishing, 2019).

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that before the Soviet Revolution, the general literacy rates in Russia were very low. For example, during the 1870s, the time of Twain’s first introduction to Russian audiences, about eighty-two percent for the nobility were fully literate, but the literacy rate among the rural population stood only at eighteen percent (see Boris Mironov, “The Development of Literacy in Russia and the USSR from the Tenth to the Twentieth Centuries,” *History of Education Quarterly* 31, no. 2 [1991]: 242).

<sup>14</sup> Blanc published under the pen name “Th.[érèse] Bentzon,” her maiden name; Th. Bentzon, “Les Humoristes Américains: Mark Twain,” *Revue des Deux Mondes* 100 (July 1872): 313–35. Excerpts of Bentzon’s piece on Twain, translated into English by Greg Robinson, appear in *The Mark Twain Anthology: Great Writers on his Life and Works*, edited by Shelley Fisher Fishkin; see Th.[érèse] Bentzon, “From the American Humorists: Mark Twain,” trans. Greg Robinson, *The Mark Twain Anthology: Great Writers on his Life and Works*, ed. Shelley Fisher Fishkin (New York: Library of America, 2010, 24–29).

<sup>15</sup> See “Американские юмористы: Марк Твен (American humorists: Mark Twain),” *Биржевые ведомости* (Stock exchange news), 249, September 14, 1872, 1–2.

<sup>16</sup> P. V. Baldytsin, “Mark Tven,” *История литературы США* (History of American literature) 4, <http://american-lit.niv.ru/american-lit/istoriya-literatury-ssha-4/baldicyn-mark-tven-1.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> In Russian: “Наконец-то я видел настоящего американца, первого американца, отвечающего моим представлениям о том, каким должен быть американец.” All translations from Russian, unless otherwise noted, are mine (quoted in Baldytsin, “Mark Tven,” 4).

<sup>18</sup> Maurice Friedberg, "The U.S. in the U.S.S.R.: American Literature through the Filter of Recent Soviet Publishing and Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 2, no. 3 (1976): 520.

<sup>19</sup> Many of the popular journals where these translations first appeared were enjoyed by the whole family, wives and older children included, which meant that the audience often did not have the intellectual preparation and presumed discerning tastes of a member of the elite classes.

<sup>20</sup> *The Spy* was the first of James Fenimore Cooper's works to be translated into Russian (from a French version) by Ivan Krupenikov and published in Moscow in 1825 (see Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 6). A later popular translation, from the English, of James Fenimore Cooper, Дирслэйер (The deerslayer), trans. Irinarkh Vedenksii, came out in *Отечественные Записки* (Notes of the fatherland), nos. 9–11 (1848).

<sup>21</sup> For more information about Mayne Reid's popularity in Russia before the Soviet Revolution, see Friedberg, "The U.S. in the U.S.S.R": 520.

<sup>22</sup> For more on Bret Hart's reception in Russia, see A. V. Vaschenko, "Брет Гарт," *История литературы США* (History of American literature), 4, <http://american-lit.niv.ru/american-lit/istoriya-literatury-ssha-4/vaschenko-bret-gart-1.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Of course, there were many Russian reviewers who were mostly impressed by Twain's ability to handle comic situations, typical of the American middle class. His humor, therefore, was found to be particularly adept at amusing the common readers rather than the elite and was judged to lack true sarcasm. The American view of the early reception of Mark Twain in Russia has mostly chosen to highlight this trend in the critical analyses of his work that appeared in the nineteenth-century Russian press (see, for example, Albert Parry's 1941 article "Mark Twain in Russia," which can serve as an example of this assessment of the Russian critical response to Twain's writing; Parry, "Mark Twain in Russia," 168–75). More recent reviews of the variety of articles and studies about Twain in Russia prior to the October Revolution suggest that Russians held much more complex opinions of the nature of his comedic genius, as I argue here as well.

<sup>24</sup> This appreciation of Twain's writing as political and social satire was further strengthened with the publication of *The Gilded Age* in the literary magazine *Отечественные записки* (Notes of the fatherland) in 1874 (Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age*, trans. Maria K. Cebrikova, *Отечественные записки*, 1874). In her introduction to the novel, the translator Maria K. Cebrikova argued that the "ruthless exposure of the shady sides of American life" constituted the work's main achievement, and praised Twain and his coauthor, Charles Dudley Warner, for their courage and willingness to expose the depravities of American life (see Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 11–12). Her assessment is typical of the Russian progressive intelligentsia's reception of Mark Twain's writing during the 1870s and 1880s,

as can be gleaned from various articles and introductions to Twain's collected or selected works at the time.

<sup>25</sup> By the mid-1890s, Twain's novels and stories were available for purchase in bookstores or were printed in all types of periodicals (liberal, conservative, satirical, family-oriented, and foreign and domestic literary journals) all around the empire. The general reading public was clearly well prepared for the publication of the first big collection of his works in 1896 and all subsequent many editions of the American author's texts.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, in *Семейные вечера* (Family evenings), nos. 3–8 (1877), (see Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 107).

<sup>27</sup> Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Twain, *Принц и нищий* (The prince and the pauper), trans. unknown, (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1883).

<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that politically progressive critics once again highlighted the satirical message of *Принц и нищий* (The prince and the pauper) and interpreted it as an attack on the lack of democracy in monarchies of the past and the present. One literary reviewer for the journal *Дело* (Work) even went so far as to proclaim that the work should not be viewed as a historical novel at all, but as a book concerned with contemporary life (Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 37).

<sup>30</sup> Sarukhanyan, "Mark Twain in Russia," <http://twainproject.blogspot.com>.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Гокльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. A. G. Markelova, *Изящная литература* (Fine literature), nos. 2–5 (1885), (see Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 109). The publication history of *Huck Finn* in Russia reviewed here is based mostly on the bibliography of works by Mark Twain translated into Russian offered in Morrell's dissertation, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*—to my knowledge, the only existing American book-length study of Mark Twain's reception in Russia (Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*). V. A. Libman lists most of the same bibliographical entries but does not provide information about the number of printed copies or number of printings of individual editions; see V[alentina]. A. Libman, "Американская литература в русских переводах" (American literature in Russian translations)," *Проблемы литературы США XX века* (Problems of the literature of the USA of the XX c.), ed. M. O. Mendel'son, 391–549 (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), expanded and reprinted as a separate book in 1977.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Twain, *Похождения Гека Финна* (Adventures of Huck Finn), *Семейные вечера* (Family Evenings), nos. 3–8 (1886), (qtd. in Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 109).

<sup>33</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Финна* (Finn's adventures) (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1888).

<sup>34</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Финна Гиперберинна* (Adventures of Finn Hipperberrin [sic]), trans. A. K. Somov (Moscow: P. P. Soikin, 1895).

<sup>35</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна*, trans. unknown, *Ежемесячный литературный журнал* (Monthly literary journal), no. 9 (1895) (see Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 112).

<sup>36</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Финна Гекльберри, товарища Тома Сойера* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer's friend), trans. V. L. Rankov, in *Собрание сочинений* (Collected works), vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Panteleev, 1896). The same translation, though with a shorter title, *Похождения Финна Гекльберри* (*Pokhozhdenia Finna Gekl'berri*), was reissued in *Complete Collected Works*, Vols. 12–13, trans. V. L. Rankov (St. Petersburg: P. P. Soikin, 1911).

<sup>37</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна: повесть для юношества всех возрастов* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A novel for the young at heart at any age), trans. A. Z. Muravieva (St. Petersburg: M. O. Vol'f, 1905).

<sup>38</sup> Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. by I. I. Aksenov, *Collected Works*, vols. 5–6, (Moscow: I. D. Sytin, 1907).

<sup>39</sup> Mark Twain, *Пригоди Гекльберрі Фінна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. N. Grinchenko (Kiev: Vek, 1908). For more information about this translation, see M. D. Alyoshina, "Особливості відтворення стилістики роману Марка Твена *Пригоди Гекльберрі Фінна* в українських, російських та польських перекладах" (Features of the representation of the stylistics of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish translations), *Наукові записки Бердянського державного педагогічного університету* (Scientific notes of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University) (2015): 102–11, esp. 105–09.

<sup>40</sup> *Приключения Финна* (Adventures of Finn), trans. A. Annenskiaia (St. Petersburg: Vaskhody, 1909); *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), in *Mark Twain's Collected Works*, vol. 5, trans. V. G. Tan (St. Petersburg: M.G. Konfel'd, 1910); *Приключения Финна* (Adventures of Finn), trans. A. Repin (Moscow: M.V. Kliukin, 1911); *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. V.L. Rankov, in *Полное собрание сочинений Марк Твена* (The complete collected works of Mark Twain), vols. 12–13, ed. Maksim Belinskii (St. Petersburg: P. P. Soikin, 1912).

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the introduction to Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), (2019), where the translation is deemed by the anonymous reviewer to be "the best existing translation, written by the Russian author and translator Mikhail Engelgardt" (лучший существующий перевод, написанный

русским писателем и переводчиком Михаилом Энгельгардтом), Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), introduction (Charleston, SC: Shelkoper Publishing, 2019), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Yan Berezniitsky quoted in Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “American Literature in Transnational Perspective: The Case of Mark Twain,” *A Companion to American Literary Studies*, ed. Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 289.

<sup>43</sup> The New Economic Policy (NEP) was an economic policy marked by a partial return to capitalist enterprise introduced by Lenin in 1921, which lasted until 1928, when Stalin denounced it and replaced it with the Five-Year Plans. The NEP years saw a significant rise in agricultural production, which enabled the economic recovery following the devastation of the First World War, the Soviet Revolution, and the Civil War. The widespread reforms that affected positively every sphere of life under the Socialist government at the time also led to a revival of the arts. During those seven years of relaxed censorship, many new writers whose views were often critical of the status quo were allowed to see their works in print.

<sup>44</sup> This idea was to be further developed in the Soviet critical reception of the novel during the 1950s, as I will argue presently.

<sup>45</sup> *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn) was included in the six-volume edition of Mark Twain’s *Collected Works*; Mark Twain, *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), in *Collected Works*, ed. P. K. Guber and K. Chukovsky (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927). A separate publication of the novel, simply titled *Приключения Финна*, [Adventures of Finn], in a translation directed by V. Dinze, came out the same year from the publishing house *Krasnaia gazeta* (The red gazette) in Leningrad; Mark Twain, *Приключения Финна*, (Adventures of Finn), trans. V. Dinze (Leningrad: *Krasnaia gazeta*, 1927).

<sup>46</sup> See *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. K.I Chukovsky, (Moscow: *Molodaia gvardia*, 1933), and *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. unknown (Saratov: *Oblastnoe izdatelstvo*, 1937).

<sup>47</sup> As Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova have noted as well, children’s literature was gradually becoming a “Soviet institution” during the 1920s and 30s as “a part of the general cultural-ideological policies of the state” (Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova, “Introduction,” *Russian Children’s Literature: Changing Paradigms*, special forum issue of *The Slavic and East European Journal* 49, no. 2 (2005): 190). The translation of appropriate children’s classics fit well with the contemporary goals, while at the same time allowing some Soviet writers to more or less find safe haven from political persecution.

<sup>48</sup> Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 10. The Gorky Institute of World Literature was inaugurated on September 17, 1932—a carefully chosen

date to coincide with celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of Maxim Gorky's literary activity. It was conceived as, and continues to be, the preeminent institution in the field of literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Its many departments specialize in different national literatures, genres, and literary theory.

<sup>49</sup> Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 186.

<sup>51</sup> Friedberg, "The U.S. in the U.S.S.R.," 569.

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of representative critical evaluations of the novel by leading Soviet scholars during the 1950s, see, for example, Morrell, *The Reception of Mark Twain in Russia*, 80–83.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Twain, *Марк Твен: Избранное* (Mark Twain: Selected works), trans. unknown (Rostov-on-Don: Rostovizdat, 1950); Mark Twain, *Марк Твен: Избранные произведения* (Selected works), trans. unknown (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1953).

<sup>54</sup> Daruzes's translation was first issued as a separate book by the Children's State Publishing House in 1950 and then reprinted again in 1955.

<sup>55</sup> Mark Twain (Твен, Марк), *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (Prikluchenia Gekl'beri Fina; Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), trans. Nina Daruzes (Moscow: Detgiz, 1955). Nina Daruzes (1899–1982) was a leading Anglo-Americanist and highly regarded literary scholar and translator of Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, George Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, Henry James, John Dos Passos, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Langston Hughes, Irwin Shaw, Erskine Caldwell, Willa Cather, and Pearl S. Buck.

<sup>56</sup> The oppression of Black Americans was a main focus of attention in all socialist evaluations of US writing, which was yet another reason *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* received so much more attention during the Soviet era.

<sup>57</sup> Viktor Shklovsky, the famous Russian Formalist literary critic, was the first to share publicly his disappointment with the Soviet critical lack of appreciation of Mark Twain's formal choices. In an article titled "About Mark Twain" (О Марке Твене), published in *Интернациональная литература* (International literature) in 1939, he criticized the approach taken by M. O. Mendel'son, one of the most prominent Twain specialists in the Stalinist era, because it failed to acknowledge the importance of the American author's chosen artistic devices; Viktor Shklovsky, "О Марке Твене" (About Mark Twain), *Интернациональная литература* (International literature) 7–8 (1939): 219. During the second half of the 1950s, more and more Soviet scholars began to note Twain's stylistic and generic choices. Examples of this new trend can be found in M. N. Bobrova, "Литература США 1870-1917" (American literature 1870–1917) and "Марк Твен 1870-1917" (Mark Twain, 1870–1917), in *Курс лекции по истории зарубежной литературы XX в.* (Lectures on the history of twentieth-century foreign literature), ed. L. G. Andreev and

R. M. Samarin (Moscow: Izdat. Moskoskogo Universiteta, 1956), 417–40 and 441–67. In particular, Bobrova singles out *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as Twain's most significant work because of the importance and value of its ideas [идейная полноценность] and its art.

<sup>58</sup> See Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), 29. The parallel to Gogol here is striking once again. Just as Russian critics firmly believed that modern Russian literature was launched by Gogol's "Overcoat," so did they overwhelmingly agree that Twain's *Huck Finn* had catapulted US literature into modernity as well. Raisa Orlova, one of the many serious Russian scholars of US literature, best captures the contemporary assessment of the enormous merits of Twain's novel in her chosen title for her collection of critical essays; see Raisa Orlova, *Потёмки Гекльберры Финна: Ocherki sovremennoi amerikanskoi literatury* (The descendants of *Huckleberry Finn*: Essays about contemporary American literature) (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1964).

<sup>59</sup> Mary Bekker was a translator and literary scholar from Leningrad who was among the first in the world to offer a study of the history of African American literature from its beginnings in the eighteenth century to her present moment; Mary Bekker, *Прогрессивная негритянская литература США* (Progressive Negro literature of the USA) (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957).

<sup>60</sup> For more information about Soviet views on African American authors, see, for example, Boris Gilenson, "Afro-American Literature in the Soviet Union," *Negro American Literature Forum* 9, no. 1 (1975): 25, 28–29.

<sup>61</sup> Another prominent Soviet translator and critic, Abel Startsev, drew further attention to the importance of Jim's character in both Twain's novel and American literature as a whole in the chapter on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in his 1963 monograph *Марк Твен и Америка* (Mark Twain and America): Abel Startsev, *Марк Твен и Америка* (Mark Twain and America) (Moscow : Sovetskii pisatel', 1963). In Startsev's assessment, "Характер Джима – одна из самых смелых попыток создать реалистический образ негра-раба в американской литературе XIX века. Твен избегает в образе Джима идеализации, присутствующей в фигурах невольников в *Хижине дяди Тома* Бичер-Стоу" (Jim's character is one of the bravest attempts to create a realistic representation of the enslaved Black person in nineteenth-century American literature. With his Jim, Twain avoided the idealization found in the enslaved characters of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*); Startsev, *Марк Твен и Америка*, <http://s-clemens.ru/books/item/fo0/so0/z0000001/index.shtml>.

<sup>62</sup> See, for example, M. N. Bobrova's "Марк Твен, 1870–1917" (Mark Twain, 1870–1917). In *Курс лекций по истории зарубежных литератур XX века* (Lectures on the history of twentieth-century foreign literature), edited by L. G. Andreev and R. M. Samarin, 417–67. Moscow: Izdat.

Moskoskogo Universiteta; or M. O. Mendel'son, *Mark Tven* (Mark Twain) (Moscow: Molodaia gvardia, 1958). Of course, there were many extremely positive early reviews of the novel when it first came out in America, such as Henley, Matthews, Perry, J. C. Harris (see Louis Budd, *Mark Twain: The Contemporary Reviews* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 259–80), but Soviet scholars did not have reliable access to them.

<sup>63</sup> Qtd. in Lauren G. Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 6. For more on the importance of literary translation in Russian culture see, for example, Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History*.

<sup>64</sup> V. M. Rossels, *Estafeta slova* (Relay of the word) (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1972), 13.

<sup>65</sup> Korneĭ Chukovsky, *The Art of Translation: Korneĭ Chukovsky's "A High Art,"* trans. and ed. Lauren G. Lexington (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 127–28.

<sup>66</sup> Chukovsky, *The Art of Translation*, 128.

<sup>67</sup> Chukovsky, *The Art of Translation*, 128.

<sup>68</sup> Sarukhanyan, "Mark Twain in Russia," <http://twainproject.blogspot.com>.

<sup>69</sup> All examples are taken from Daruzes's 1950 translation of the novel. In the scene where we are first introduced to Jim's character, his aurally distinct "Who dah?" is conveyed simply and with perfectly standard Russian as "Кто там?" (Who's there?); "whar is you" is translated as "Где же вы?" (Just where are you?). In most cases, Jim's language becomes blandscript: e.g., "I didn' know dey was so many un um" becomes in Russian, "And I didn't even know there were so many of them," while "I be dingbusted" turns into a simple "Вот это да!" (Now that's something), and "Blame de pint!" is rendered as "So much for your point!"

<sup>70</sup> Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art*, 126.

<sup>71</sup> Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art*, 125.

<sup>72</sup> Ronald Jenn, "From American Frontier to European Borders: Publishing French Translations of Mark Twain's Novels *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* (1884–1963)," *Book History* 9 (2006): 251.

<sup>73</sup> Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 259–422.

<sup>74</sup> Victor A. Doyno, "Huck's and Jim's Dynamic Interactions: Dialogues, Ethics, Empathy," *The Mark Twain Annual*, no. 1 (2003): 20.

<sup>75</sup> Forrest G. Robinson, "The Characterization of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43, no. 3 (December 1988): 370.



<sup>76</sup> Russian readers were well prepared for such a sentimentalized interpretation of Jim thanks to the continuing popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* during the Soviet period; Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Annotated Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. and introd. Henry Louis Gates, Jr and Hollis Robbins (1850; New York: W. W. Norton, 2007). For more on the influence of Stowe's famous novel on Russian perceptions of American slavery, see John MacKay, *True Songs of Freedom: Uncle Tom's Cabin in Russian Culture and Society* (Wisconsin University Press, 2013).

<sup>77</sup> John MacKay, *Four Russian Serf Narratives* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

<sup>77</sup> Here a comparison with Russian serf narratives published before the Soviet Revolution offers interesting parallels. While such works did appear in the period following the Emancipation Reform of 1861, in general serf testimonies did not receive the same attention as their African American counterparts did both before and after the Civil War in America. As John MacKay has noted in his excellent *Four Russian Serf Narratives*, the initial lack of serious interest in serf autobiographies can be attributed to the fact that pre-reform Russia did not have the "combative public atmosphere of debate" which characterized antebellum America. The small existent number (less than twenty) of serf narratives appeared in print mostly towards the end of the nineteenth century (that is, well after the serfs were already granted their freedom), and were therefore "less charged with immediate political urgency." As a result, they were "more conventionally autobiographical" and less dangerously revolutionary, which also made them more palatable to the Tsarist authorities. The formal features of their writing (including the use of standard Russian) exhibited similar conventionality as well (MacKay, *Four Russian Serf Narratives*, 4).

<sup>78</sup> [Mark Twain], *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Norton Critical Editions (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), 19.

<sup>79</sup> *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), trans. Mikhail Engelgardt. (Charleston, SC: Shelkoper Publishing, 2019), 20. Further quotations will be cited in the main text.

<sup>80</sup> *Приключения Гекльберри Финна* (*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), trans. Nina Daruzes (Moscow: Detgiz, 1955), 19.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Robinson, "The Characterization of Jim," esp. 375.

<sup>82</sup> Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 70. Further quotations will be cited in the main text.

<sup>83</sup> *Приключения Гекльберри Финна*, trans. Daruzes, 86. Further quotations will be cited in the main text.

<sup>84</sup> Robinson, "The Characterization of Jim," 381.

<sup>85</sup> Engelgardt's translation is no better, even if it tries to be more explanatory and make sure the Russian readers understand fully why Jim is so upset with Huck that he has to call him "trash": "Он означает собою душевное состояние людей, которые бросают грязь на голову своих друзей, чтобы их обмануть и одурачить" (It signifies the spiritual situation of people, who throw trash on their friends' heads, in order to deceive them and make fools of them) (*Приключения Гекльберри Финна*, 78–79). Once again, the pre-revolutionary translator chooses to overlook the original shaming.

<sup>86</sup> Sarukhanyan, "Mark Twain in Russia," <http://twainproject.blogspot.com>.

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